

EVANGELICAL NORMAL SERIES,
TEXT-BOOK No. 2

Books of the Bible.

EVANGELICAL NORMAL SERIES

TEXT-BOOK NO. 2.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE,

AND

THEIR HISTORICAL CONNECTION.

Edited and arranged by

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PREFACE.

THE BIBLE is the name given to an ancient collection of sixty-six smaller volumes, comprising narratives, poetry, moral axioms, and religious discourses, written in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek, by many different authors, who lived successively during a period of fifteen hundred years. It is exceedingly valuable as containing the most ancient writings, the most remarkable and best accredited histories, the sublimest poetry, the noblest personal, social and political morality in the world; it has peculiar and extraordinary claims on account of its professed ORIGIN and OBJECT; declaring itself to be a special Divine revelation; the Bible is the word of God. In it He makes known to man his character and will. It is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is profitable to all, teaching men what to believe, showing them in what they are wrong, instructing them in what is right. A knowledge of this book is more to be desired than gold, for in understanding, believing and obeying it there is great reward, both here and hereafter.

Every person who can should have a Bible and read it daily, praying to God for wisdom to rightly understand it, to believe and obey its precepts.

It can easily be supposed POSSIBLE for the Creator to give to his intelligent creatures direct revelations, respecting himself and his will; his wisdom and benevolence render it highly PROBABLE that he should have made such communications, if they were necessary or desirable. When we consider the deep degradation of millions of heathen in every age, and of every form of worship; the dismal uncertainty of the greatest pagan philosophers respecting the attributes and purposes of God, and the nature and destinies of the human race; and the entire failure of all modern theorists, though borrowing much from revelation, to construct any system affording adequate motives to self-improvement, and sufficient consolation under sufferings, we must be convinced that it was essential to the well-being of man that God should so speak to him.

In the study of this book of God it becomes us to inquire, What is the thought, idea or truth placed before us by the writers? It is not what we can force by our ingenuity or our fancy from the words, but what was "the mind of the Spirit," who inspired his pen? Some portions of the sacred Word admit of more than one sense or one application; but it may be taken as a general principle that the Spirit of God had some leading truth to make known in every passage, and for this truth we should search as for a hidden treasure.

It is admitted that the New Testament contains richer and fuller communications of the Divine plan of redemption than all prior revelations; therefore the Old Testament must be read in the light of the New, for the Old is prophetic of the New, and the New is but the fulfillment of the Old.

The object of this volume is to give a complete introduction to each of the sixty-six books of the Bible, and give their historical connection. The matter has been gathered with much labor from the most reliable sources. The student should read very carefully the introduction of each book, immediately before reading the book itself.

P. W. R.

CLEVELAND, O., JUNE, 1884.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

I. THE PENTATEUCH.

The Pentateuch, the name by which the first five books of the Bible are designated, is derived from two Greek words, *pente*, FIVE, and *teuchos*, a VOLUME, thus signifying the five-fold volume. Originally, these books formed one continuous work, as in the Hebrew manuscripts they are still connected in one unbroken roll. At what time they were divided into five portions, each having a separate title, is not known, but it is certain that the distinction dates at, or before, the time of the Septuagint translation.

The books of the Pentateuch contain the history of the creation of the world and its inhabitants, the fall and curse of man, the destruction of all the human race save one family of eight souls, the dispersion of the nations, the deliverance of the chosen people of God from oppression, and the introduction of that wonderful dispensation, of which the Divine Being himself was the Author and Executor, and under which the civil and ecclesiastical government of these nations was administered for so many ages.

I. GENESIS.

Genesis is a Greek word, which signifies *creation* or *production*; and this book is so called, because it gives an account of the origin of all things, so far as it concerns us to know.

It gives the history of 2369 years: .

From creation to deluge.....	1656
From deluge to call of Abraham	427
The remainder of Abraham's life.....	100
From death of Abraham to that of Isaac	105
From death of Isaac to that of Jacob.....	27
From death of Jacob to that of Joseph.....	54

1. It begins with an account of the creation of the world, of the formation of man in the image of God, and of the institution of the Sabbath and of marriage, ch. i. ii. It then relates the introduction of evil into our world, the sentence upon the tempter and upon man, and God's gracious promise of a Saviour, ch. iii. The account of *Cain*, and of the rapid progress and universal prevalence of wickedness, followed by the destruction of the ungodly world, illustrates the awful effects of the fall and destruction of the race.

2. After the flood, is recorded God's covenant of mercy with the new world; and Noah's prophecy respecting his three sons; presenting an outline of the future history of mankind, regarded in three great divisions, ch. ix. Ch. x., showing how the earth was peopled by Noah's descendants, explains the origin of nations. The next great event related is the general outbreak of human corruption at Babel; and the defeat of the project by a Divine interposition, the effects of which remain to this day; followed by the dispersion of the human family over the earth, ch. xi.

3. After this, the general affairs of mankind are only occasionally noticed; and the history is chiefly occupied with the individual, and his descendants, whom God chose and separated from the rest of the world; that of their race the promised Saviour should come; and that in the meantime his Church might be upheld in them, while all other people were involved in heathenism. The history of Abraham and his family ch. xii to xxv. is specially remarkable for the great *temporal* and *spiritual* promises which God gave to him:—the possession of the land of Canaan by his offspring being the subject of the one,—the other comprising the universal blessing of mankind,—the “blessing of all the families of the earth—in his seed.”

2. EXODUS.

Exodus is a Greek word, which signifies going out or departure. This book is so named, because it relates the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt; which is followed by an account of God's care of them and covenant with them. There is declension, both moral, political, and religious, till the cry of the degenerate, in its conscious misery, is raised to heaven, when Divine help appears, working supernaturally through human means, till deliverance is effected by “shedding of blood.” In brief, the book gives a sketch of the early history of Israel as a nation, 1. enslaved, 2. redeemed, and 3. set apart, through the blending of its religious and political life, and consecrated to the service of God. The Code of Moral and Civil Law promulgated in this book has been the foundation of all laws in civilized States, the former being unalterable, because it springs from the natural law engraven in the human heart.

This book abounds with types and figures of Christian

blessings and of Gospel times. In particular, the passover was a striking emblem of the sacrifice of Christ, "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." And the passage of the Israelites from Egypt through the Red Sea, the wilderness, and the Jordan, to the promised land, was a lively representation of a Christian's pilgrimage through life to that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

This book may be divided into two principal parts.

1. The *deliverance of the Israelites* from Egypt, including:

Their oppressed state after the death of Joseph, and their wonderful increase, ch. i. The birth and life of Moses; and his preparation for his great office, ii.-vi. The deliverance of the Israelites, and the destruction of their enemies, vii.-xxv; 1-21.

2. The *manifestation of God* in the midst of Israel, and the giving of the law, comprising:

The entrance of the Israelites into the wilderness; and the miraculous provision made for their guidance and support, ch. xv. 22-27-xviii. Their national covenant with God, made, broken, and renewed; together with some judicial laws, and directions respecting the sanctuary, priesthood, and ritual, xix.-xxxiv. The tabernacle built; and God's solemn possession of it, xxxv.-xl.

3. LEVITICUS.

This book is called *Leviticus*, because it contains the laws relating to the rites and ceremonies of Divine worship, of which the Levites were the appointed ministers. It contains the code of laws, ceremonial, civil, and judicial, which for the purity of their morality, the wisdom, justice, and beneficence of their enactments, and the simplicity, dignity, and impressive nature of their rites, are unrivalled among the ancient nations. It is closely connected with Exodus at its beginning, and with Numbers at its close; for, while the order for consecration of priests is given in the former, the ceremony itself is recorded in *Leviticus*; and the exemption of the Levites from military service, and their special functions, are given in *Numbers*. But it has a distinctive character in the general exclusion from it of historical narrative (the exceptions being the Consecration of Priests, Death of Nadab and Abihu, Stoning of the Blasphemer). It contains the history of only one month. Its contents are: 1. Laws for the Altar (to the

people and the priests). 2. Consecration of Priests, and death of those offering unbidden incense. 3. Laws of clean and unclean food. 4. Purifications. 5. Leprosy. 6. Day of Atonement. 7. Slaughter of animals. 8. Unlawful marriages and lusts. 9. Precepts on duties of the people and holiness of the priests. 10. Victims for the Altar. 11. Convocation Days. 12. Weekly offerings of oil and bread. 13. Punishment of Blasphemer. 14. Sabbatical year and Jubilee. 15. Promises and warnings. 16. Vows.

Offerings. The Hebrew name *korban* is equivalent to oblation, including everything given to the service of God, e. g. firstfruits, tithes, contributions to the maintenance of the sanctuary, priests, worship, and all kinds of sacrifices.

Offerings for the Altar were animal (1. Burnt-offerings, 2. Peace-offerings, 3. Sin-offerings) and vegetable (1. Meat and drink-offerings for the great altar in the Court, 2. Incense and meat-offerings for the altar in the Holy Place). Every burnt-offering and peace-offering was accompanied by a meat-offering and drink-offering, in proportion to the victim, thus:

	<i>Flour.</i>	<i>Oil.</i>	<i>Wine.</i>
<i>With a bullock</i>	$\frac{3}{10}$ ephah.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hin.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hin.
<i>With a ram</i>	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{1}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{3}$ "
<i>With a sheep or goat</i>	$\frac{1}{10}$	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{1}{4}$ "

These offerings were 1. Public sacrifices, at the cost and on behalf of the "whole congregation" (e. g. daily morning and evening sacrifices, and those on festivals); 2. Private sacrifices, enjoined by law on particular occasions, or by voluntary devotion of the worshipper — as thank-offerings. Besides these there were special sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, Passover, &c. A trespass-offering was a sin-offering, accompanied by a pecuniary fine.

Feasts. The weekly festival was the Sabbath (commemorating rest from creation, and deliverance from bondage in Egypt); the monthly festival was the day of the new moon, on which rest was not enjoined, but additional services. The new moon of the seventh month Tisri (October), or *Feast of Trumpets*, began the civil year, and that of Ab (March) the ecclesiastical year. The great festivals were 1. Passover, on the eve of the 14th of Ab, which lasted to the 21st; 2. Pentecost (the fiftieth day after), or *feast of weeks*, on completion of

the harvest; 3. Tabernacles, from the 15th to 23rd of Tisri, commemorating the ingathering of all fruits. The people lived for a week in booths, to remind them of their desert wanderings. The fast-day was "the great day" (John vii. 37). This feast was preceded by the Day of Atonement. Every seventh year was sabbatic, when the land had rest. Every fiftieth was a jubilee, when slaves were freed, land sold reverted to its original owner, and mortgages were cancelled.

To these were added Purim, 14th or 15th of Adar (March), in remembrance of the deliverance by Esther; and the Dedication of the Second Temple (December 25).

Fasts were the Day of Atonement, the Siege of Jerusalem (December 23), Capture of the City (June 23), Burning of the Temple (about July 15), Complete devastation (September 15).

4. NUMBERS.

This book derives its title from its giving an account of the numberings of the people of Israel: the first of which took place in the beginning of the second year after their departure out of Egypt; the second, in the plains of Moab, at the conclusion of their journeyings, when their number was found to be very little less than it was when they entered the wilderness. It is worthy of observation, how greatly this numbering of the people, according to their tribes, would tend to preserve them from all intermixture with their vicious and idolatrous neighbors; each true born Israelite being obliged and enabled to deliver a clear account of the tribe, and even the family, from which he was descended; which was of still higher importance for preserving the certain genealogy of Christ the Messiah, who, according to Divine promise, was to be born of this nation.

This book relates also the various marches and encampments of the Israelites in the wilderness during the space of about thirty-nine years. Most of the events here recorded happened in the first and last of those years. We see here the providential care of the Almighty over his chosen people during their wanderings; feeding the vast multitude with bread from heaven, supplying them with water out of a rock, and causing the raiment which they brought out of Egypt to last without wearing out until the end of their journey. And we see the murmurings and rebellions by which they provoked and offended their Heavenly Protector, on account of which they

were visited with repeated marks of his just displeasure, and were not allowed to "enter into his rest." The Apostle Paul, warning the converted Hebrews, expressly states that their forefathers could not enter into the land of Canaan "because of their unbelief," Heb. iii. 19; and in 1 Cor. x. 1-11, he says, that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and were written for our admonition."

5. DEUTERONOMY.

This book is a repetition of much, both of history and of the laws, contained in the three foregoing books: which repetition Moses delivered to Israel, a little before his death, both by word of mouth, that it might affect, and by writing, that it might abide. The name of Deuteronomy, given to this book by the Greek translators, from *deuteros*, SECOND, and *nomos*, LAW, signifying the second law, or a second edition of the law; with some additions peculiarly adapted to the state of the people when just entering the promised land; and with explanations tending to illustrate the holiness of heart which the law required. As the book of Leviticus would instruct them in the forms of their worship, so this book may be considered as instructing them in what spirit they should perform it. The peculiar advantage of this solemn repetition of the law at this time appears from the circumstance, that the men of that generation to which the law was first given were all dead, and a new generation was sprung up, to whom God would have it repeated by Moses himself, now that they were just going to take possession of the land of Canaan, that it might make a lasting impression upon them.

The various mercies which God has bestowed upon them and their forefathers from their departure out of Egypt are recapitulated; the people are reminded of their rebellion, ingratitude, and chastisements; and the laws formerly given are repeated, and explained, and some particular precepts added to them, with copious reasonings for the enforcing of them from every motive imaginable. Promises are given, on the one hand, of prosperity, happiness, and honor, both individual and national, as consequent upon their obedience; and on the other, the miseries are foretold which should follow their apostasy and corruption—their plagues, captivities, and dispersions; their extreme sufferings when besieged; the desolation of their land; their degradation and oppressions; and

their present condition, as exhibited to our own observation: and to these predictions are added promises of abundant mercy and blessing upon repentance.

Such are the general outlines of this book; and as it must have been exceedingly useful to the Israelites, so will the persual of it prove to us, if comparing the history with the Lord's providential and gracious dealings with us, and our conduct towards him, we apply the exhortations and persuasions to our own consciences, to excite our minds to a believing, grateful obedience to the commands of God.

II. THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

The historical books of Scripture—from Joshua to Esther—contain the history of the Jewish Church and nation, from their first settlement in the promised land to their return thither after their captivity in Babylon; comprising a period of about 1040 years.

There were great and mighty nations at this time in the world, celebrated, it is likely, for wisdom, learning, and valor,—for illustrious men, and illustrious actions;— yet the records of these are all lost either in silence or in fables, while the inconsiderable nation of the Jews, that dwelt alone, and was “not reckoned among the nations,” makes so great a figure in the best known, most ancient, and most lasting of all histories; in which no notice is taken of the affairs of other nations, except only as they fall in with the affairs of the Jews: for “the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,” Deut. xxxii. 8, 9. Such concern has God for his Church in every age, and so dear have its interests been to him.

It is not, however, strictly speaking, a history of the Jews that we have here, but such a selection from their history, by the Holy Spirit, as was best adapted to make men “wise unto salvation.” Such political events are brought forward as illustrate the moral state of the times; and subjects are introduced which an ordinary historian would have thought unworthy of notice. For example, immediately after the record of a great political event—the deliverance of three kings and their armies from destruction—an instance is given of God's tender care for the widow of an obscure prophet, 2 Kings iv.

That which no merely human history could give is here set before us; men's secret motives are laid bare, stripped of the disguises in which they sought to involve them. — Often great political events are passed by; long reigns are compressed into a few sentences; and details of private life are dwelt upon, because they display to us those things which are of most esteem in God's sight, and which it is of most importance for us to know: namely his attributes, his grace, his providence, &c.; the workings of the human heart; and the nature of men's duties both to God and their fellow creatures, in those situations and circumstances in which men are usually placed, and most need instruction. While, interwoven with the whole, may be traced, as the great leading subject, the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

This history is of great use for understanding some other parts of the Scriptures. The account we have here of David's life and reign, especially of his troubles, is a key to many of his psalms. And much light is shed on the prophecies by these histories.

The people of Israel, whose history is here set before us, was typical of the Church of God in the days of the Messiah; and as the prophecies which related to them looked forward to the latter days, so did the histories; for "these things happened to them for ensamples," 1 Cor. x. 11. By the tenor of this history we are given to understand three things concerning the Church. *First*, That if we see not perfect purity and unity in the Church, we are not therefore to be stumbled, though we be grieved at its corruptions and divisions. *Second*, That we are not to expect the constant tranquillity and prosperity of the Church. The Jewish nation was often oppressed and afflicted from its youth; had its years of servitude, as well as its days of triumph; was often obscured, diminished, impoverished, and brought low; but still God never suffered it to be wholly consumed or destroyed. Let us not then be surprised to see the Gospel Church sometimes driven into the wilderness, and the powers of darkness seeming to prevail against it. *Third*, That we need not fear its utter extirpation. For as the ancient Israel and the earthly Jerusalem, by the wonderful care of Divine Providence, outrode all the storms with which they were tossed and threatened, and continued in being, till they were made to resign their honors to the

Gospel Church, of which they were the figures; so shall that also, notwithstanding all its shocks, be preserved, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and the kingdom of grace has its perfection in the kingdom of glory.

There is much uncertainty with regard to the authors of these historical records. As it is common for historical documents to bear a title derived from the personages and the subject matter treated of, it cannot with any certainty be inferred that these books were originally written, or even subsequently compiled, by the persons whose names they bear. It is generally considered that they are for the most part derived from pre-existing documents in the form of chronicles, which were coeval with the events narrated. And it is highly probable that persons of a prophetical character existed all along the line of the Hebrew annals, whose office it was to record the leading events of their history, and to deposit them in the archives of the nation. The books of Kings and Chronicles seem to be mainly made up from these sources.

1. JOSHUA.

We have in this book a record of the affairs of the Israelites under the government of Joshua, the successor of Moses. We have seen in the preceding books, the frequent rebellions and provocations of the generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt, on account of which they were excluded from the good land which they had despised. We have here the continuation of the history of the next generation — those who were under twenty years of age when they came out of Egypt, and those who had been born and grown up in the wilderness — who appear to have been of a better spirit than their fathers. The trials and discipline they underwent, during their long wanderings in the wilderness, had the effect of awakening and humbling them, and fitting them for great mercy; and in connexion with the instructions of Moses, God poured out his Spirit upon them.

The worship of God, which had been instituted at Mount Sinai, was now more fully brought into practice. The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh; and the people, on their settlement in the land of promise, were put into a condition to observe the various laws and ordinances, which had been previously given, but which could not be fully carried into effect during their itinerant state in the wilderness.

This book may be divided into three principal sections:

Section 1. Relates the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites; including, the appointment of Joshua to be captain-general, ch. i.; sending the spies to Jericho, ii.; passage over Jordan, iii. iv.; circumcision, and passover at Gilgal, and appearance of the captain of the Lord's host to Joshua, v.; capture of Jericho, Achan's sin and punishment, and capture of Ai, vi.-viii. 1-29; reading the law on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, viii. 30-35; wily conduct of the Gibeonites, ix.; war with the Canaanitish kings, standing still of the sun and moon, overthrow of the Canaanites, and subjugation of the country, x. xi.; recapitulation of conquests, xii.

2. Contains the division of the country among the Israelites; including the boundaries of the land not yet conquered, ch. xiii., 1-6; inheritance of the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh east of Jordan, xiii. 6-33; inheritance of Caleb, borders of the lot of Judah, and cities of Judah, xiv. xv.; lots of Ephraim and Manasseh, xvi. xvii.; setting up the tabernacle at Shiloh, and division of the rest of the land among the other tribes, xviii. xix.; appointment of the cities of refuge, xx.; and the Levitical cities, xxi.; return of the two tribes and a half to the other side of Jordan, and transactions which followed thereupon, xxii.

3. Joshua's farewell admonitions and death, ch. xxiii. xxiv.

NOTE. *Destruction of the Canaanites.* We may regard the Jewish wars and conquests in Canaan, and the terrible destruction brought upon the inhabitants of that country, as the execution of a dreadful, but just sentence pronounced by God against the enormous and incorrigible crimes of those nations — that they were intended to be made an example to the whole world, of God's avenging wrath against sins of heinous magnitude, and of such a kind as could only be checked by the signal and public overthrow of nations notoriously addicted to them, and so addicted as to have incorporated them even into their religion and their public institution. We are to remember also that God had borne long with them — that they had neglected former awful warnings; especially the deluge, and the destruction of the cities of the plain, situated in the very heart of Canaan — that God did not proceed to execute his judgment till their wickedness was full — that the Israelites were mere instruments in the hands of the righteous Providence, for effecting the extermination of the people, of whom it was necessary to make a public example to the rest of mankind, and whose evil influence, had they been allowed to remain, would have been most hurtful to the Israelites, who alone stood forth as the light and hope of the world — and that this extermination, which might have been

accomplished by a pestilence, by fire, by earthquakes, was appointed to be done by the hands of the Israelites, as being the clearest and most intelligible method of displaying the power and righteousness of the God of Israel — his power over the pretended gods of these nations, and his righteous hatred of the crimes into which they had fallen.

It appears probable, that even after the time of God's forbearance had expired, the Canaanites still had the alternative to flee elsewhere, as many did, settling in Africa and in Spain; or to renounce their idolatries, and submit to, and serve the God of Israel: in which case it appears from several passages that there was mercy for them.

2. JUDGES.

This book contains the history of the Israelites from the death of Joshua to the days of Eli, under 13 Judges (men whom God raised in times of imminent danger for the deliverance of His people from their enemies). Samuel, probably, wrote it. Its chronology is very difficult; but it must comprise the period of about 300 years.

The latter part of the book, chs. xvii.-xxi., belongs, in chronological order, to a period not long after the death of Joshua; but it is put at the end in order that the regular narrative may not be interrupted.

As to the real character of several of the Judges, it is by no means easy to form a correct idea of it. Where our knowledge is so scanty and imperfect, our decisions ought to be cautious and modest. They were men raised up for especial purposes, and they acted by an especial commission. We are not, therefore, either to justify or condemn them with unreflecting promptitude. The clear and weighty instruction which the book is intended to convey is what demands our chief consideration. It furnishes us, then, with a striking picture of a country without magistracy; of the contest between true and false religion; of the judgment of God on impiety, and of his mercy to the penitent. The Israelites, now settled in Canaan, instead of improving their blessings, to the glory of God, and to their own happiness, plunged into idolatry, and brought on themselves the severe chastisements of Almighty God. They sinned, and were punished; they repented, and were delivered; renewed offense was followed by renewed chastisement; but, in the truth and forbearance of God, they were still preserved.

The 13 Judges were Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jari, Jephtha, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Eli, and

Samson; but it does not appear that they ruled in succession, but at intervals, and more than one of them at the same time, in different parts of the land.

3. RUTH.

This short book, which is supposed to have been written by Samuel, may be considered as a sequel to the Book of Judges, and an introduction to the ensuing history in it — we find excellent examples of faith, piety, patience, humility, industry, and kindness, in the ordinary occurrences of life; also intimations of the special care which God's providence takes of our most minute concerns, encouraging us to entire confidence therein. Naomi's afflictions exhibit her fortitude under them, and give a lustre to her affectionate concern for her daughters-in-law, in the expression of which she shows equal wisdom and tenderness. She sets before them fully what they have to expect if they accompany her to Canaan. Orpah wept, but returned to her idols: her good resolutions failed on trial. But Ruth loved Naomi for her piety; her decision seems to have been founded not merely on natural affections, but on religious conviction. Her own declaration, "thy God shall be my God," implied a direct renunciation of idolatry. The testimony of Boaz shows this, ch. ii. 12.

It had been foretold to the Jews that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards further revealed that he should be of the family of David. It was important, therefore, that the history of that family should be written before those promises were delivered.

In the adoption of Ruth, a heathen, a Moabitess, into the Church of God and the commonwealth of Israel, we see a ray of hope rising upon the Gentile world: and still more in her being taken into the line of the Messiah, we seem to have a pre-intimation of the great mystery that the Gentiles should be sanctified by him, and joined with his people, and that there should be one fold and one Shepherd.

4. THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

The two Books of Samuel anciently formed only one book. They are also called the First and Second Books of Kings, as being two of the four books which contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. It is uncertain who was the

penman of these books. It is supposed by some, that Samuel wrote the history of his own time; and that the remainder of these books was written by the prophets Gad and Nathan, who appear, from 1 Chron. xxix. 29, to have been writers. Others suppose that these books were written at a later period, but that they were composed out of memoirs written by those prophets.

The First Book of Samuel begins with the history of the last two of the Judges, Eli and Samuel; who were not, as the rest had been, men of war, but priests: and then relates the change of the government from judges to kings; a change which had been foretold by Moses four hundred years before, Deut. xiv. 14. Under the direction of God, Saul is appointed king over Israel; but not conducting himself in the government according to the command of God, he is rejected, and David, the son of Jesse, anointed king in his place, though Saul continues still in the government. We have then an account of David's faith and valor, and his trials. Also of Saul's jealousy, and open and secret attempts upon David's life, who was preserved by a series of wonderful providences, until the death of Saul made way for his advancement to the throne.

The history of David, which is given with great minuteness and graphic detail, is of considerable importance to our understanding many other parts of Scripture, particularly the Psalms, and much of the New Testament. It pleased God to make him an ancestor and a personal type of the Messiah; and being himself endowed with the spirit of prophecy, he was inspired to set forth, in divine songs, many great and glorious things concerning the person and work of Him, who was the Son of David, and his Lord.

The time of Samuel is remarkable as the beginning of a new age of prophecy. After the death of Moses, there had been a long interval, during which no predictions are recorded. But with Samuel there began a new course of prophecy, which goes on continuously and progressively, without any material interruption, to the days of Malachi.

5. THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

This book contains a history of the reign of David. It begins with his accession to the throne, and gives an account of his gradually prevailing against the house of Saul, and his

establishment in the kingdom. It relates his victories, the growing prosperity of Israel, and his reformation of the state of religion. With these events are recorded the grievous sins he committed, which are stated with great simplicity and impartiality; the domestic and public calamities with which he was chastised.

There are several things mentioned in this book, of great importance with reference to the carrying forward of God's purposes concerning his people.

1. David's establishment of the seat of his government at Jerusalem; part of which, the fort of Zion, had been, till then, possessed by the Jebusites; but of which David now gained entire possession, ch. v. 6-9. He shortly afterwards brought up the ark thither; and God chose that city "to place his name there" 2 Chron. vi. 6; xii. 13; whence Jerusalem was called the Holy City.

2. David's conquest of the whole of the promised land; including not only the subjugation of the Philistines, and the other nations of Canaan, which had never before been fully effected, but also of the Edomites, Amalekites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians, ch. xiii.; thus extending this kingdom to the utmost bounds of that land which had been promised to the seed of Abraham (Gen. xv. 18; Ex. xxiii. 31; Deut. xi. 24), but which they never hitherto possessed.

3. God's covenant of grace with David; for by comparing ch. vii. 10-16, and xxxiii. 5, with Isa. lv. 3, Heb. i. 5, and Acts ii. 30, it is evident that the "sure mercies of David" refer to spiritual blessings bestowed through our Lord Jesus Christ. From Psa. xvii. 15, and others of David's Psalms, we may presume that the assurance of everlasting salvation, through the promised Saviour, was his great support under the disappointment of life, and in the prospect of death.

In the history of David we begin to see, as Davison remarks, the fulfilment of Jacob's prediction respecting the pre-eminence of the tribe of Judah, Gen. xl ix. 8. We see the men of Judah appearing on all great occasions, as the foremost and strongest. From the time of David's establishment upon the throne, the greatness of the tribe follows, in some measure, the greatness of his family. This accomplishment of the first part of Jacob's prediction respecting this favored tribe, could not but engage the attention of pious Israelites to the other portion of it,

which remained yet to be fulfilled, respecting the coming of Him to whom “the gathering of the people” was to be.

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.

The two Books of Kings, which in the ancient editions of the Hebrew Bible made but one book, contain the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, from the end of David's reign to the Babylonish captivity. Nothing certain is known with respect to the authorship of these books; but the most probable opinion is, that memoirs of their own times were written by several of the prophets, and that from those records the present books were compiled by Ezra, or some other inspired writer, after the return of the Jews from Babylon.

Here we see the kingdom of Israel raised to its greatest height of glory under Solomon; and after his death its division into two kingdoms by the revolt of the ten tribes, and the establishment of a separate kingdom under Jeroboam; Judah, with Benjamin annexed, alone adhering to the house of David. This is followed by some particulars of the history of the two kingdoms, and their gradual decline until their final subversion; the ten tribes being carried captive into Assyria by Shalmaneser, about the year 731 B. C.; and Judah and Benjamin being subsequently carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar: about the year 597 B. C.

Among the variety of interesting matters contained in this history, the following may be particularly noticed, as having an important connection with the advancement of the kingdom of God in the world.

1. The building of the Temple by Solomon; for which God himself condescended to give the plan, and to point out the site.

2. The eminently peaceful, prosperous, and glorious reign of Solomon.

3. The preservation of the crown of Judah by Divine Providence in the family of David, in fulfilment of God's promise to him respecting his temporal kingdom, and in preparation for the accomplishment of the greater promise respecting the kingdom of the Gospel. This is the more remarkable when it is compared with what occurred in the kingdom of Israel, where the changes from one family to another were both frequent and violent. While the descendants of David pos-

sessed his throne at Jerusalem 450 years, until both king and people were carried into captivity, the crown of Israel in the shorter period of 250 years passed through nine different families.

4. The ministry and miracles of Elijah and Elisha; the former of whom was the most illustrious prophet since the days of Moses, both in word and deed; and in the mode of his removal from this world was even more honored than Moses. In the translation of Elijah, as in that of Enoch in a former age, God gave a glimpse of the life and immortality which are now fully brought to light by the Gospel, of the glory reserved for the bodies of the saints, and of the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

The state of things during this period will be best understood by reading the writings of the contemporary prophets, in connection with the history of the period in which they lived. By closely comparing together the history and the prophecies, it will be found that they mutually illustrate each other.

NOTE.—*The variations in the Historical Books of Scripture.* There are some variations between the Books of Kings and Chronicles, chiefly in numbers, names, dates, and genealogies. These have been fully examined and satisfactorily accounted for. They chiefly arise from the following circumstances—that the same place or person had more than one name; that mistakes have arisen in copying, from some of the Hebrew letters being very much alike; that events are not always related in their regular order; and that the numbers were expressed by letters very much alike, just as if in English c meant 5, and e 500, or as if leaving out the dot of an i made 60 into 6. Some variations also arise from mistakes in the translation.

With reference to the numbers of armies, which appear sometimes exceedingly large, it is to be remembered that, in Eastern nations, every person was forced to come out when the monarch pleased; and the followers of the camp in the East are sometimes far more numerous than those armed for battle. But especially, let it ever be born in mind, that not one of these variations or seeming difficulties, whatever may be the cause, affects any Scripture doctrine, or weakens any religious truth.

The above statement is sufficient as a general explanation; the elucidation of particular texts must be sought in the best expositors.

6. FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

This book comprehends a period of about one hundred and twenty-six years, from the anointing of Solomon, and his

admission as a partner in the throne of David, to the death of Jehoshaphat: and it may be divided into two principal parts:

1. The history of the undivided kingdom under Solomon.

David's old age; Adonijah's conspiracy, and Solomon's anointing, ch. i. David's dying charge to Solomon, and death; Solomon's accession to the throne; and his judgment upon Adonijah and others, ii. His sacrifice at Gibeon; his vision, prayer for wisdom; and his wise decision, iii. Solomon's court and officers, iv. His preparations for the temple, v. Building of the temple vi. Furniture of the temple, vii. Dedication of the temple, viii. ix. 1-9. Solomon's present to Hiram; his buildings, &c., ix. 9-28. The queen of Sheba's visit, x. Solomon's numerous wives, and idolatry; Ahijah's prophecy; Solomon's death, xi.

2. The history of the divided kingdom.

Rehoboam's accession; revolt of the ten tribes; and Jeroboam's idolatry, ch. xii. Reproof of Jeroboam's sin by a prophet; the prophet's subsequent disobedience and death, xiii. Ahijah's prophecy concerning Jeroboam's family; Rehoboam's reign in Judah; Shishak's invasion, xiv. Reigns of Abijah and Asa in Judah; and of Nadab and Baasha in Israel, xv. Prophecy of Jehu against Baasha's family; reigns of Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab, in Israel, xvi. Elijah's prophecy, and history; with the trial and destruction of the prophets of Baal; and the call of Elisha, xvii.-xix. Benhadad's war against Israel, xx. Murder of Naboth; Elijah's reproof of Ahab, xxi. Jehoshaphat's league with Ahab; Micaiah, and the false prophets; death of Ahab; Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah; and Ahaziah's reign in Israel, xxii.

7. SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

This is a continuation of the preceding book; it describes the government and actions of many successive kings of Juda and Israel, from the death of Jehoshaphat, to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, by Nebuchadnezzar; comprising a period of about three hundred years. It may be divided into two parts.

Part 1. The history of the two kingdoms of Israel and of Judah, to the end of the former.

Ahaziah's sickness, and Elijah's message to him; Elijah and Ahaziah's captains, ch. i. Assumption of Elijah into

heaven; miracles and acts of Elisha, and the reigns of Jehoram and Joram in Israel, and of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah in Judah, ii.-viii. Anointing and reign of Jehu, and his deeds; beginning of the cutting short of Israel, ix. x. Athalia's usurpation; anointing of Joash by Jehoiada, and his reign in Judah, xi. xii. Reigns of Jehohaz and Jehoash in Israel; oppression of the Israelites by the Syrians; Elisha's prophecy concerning the Syrians, and his death; victories of Israel over the Syrians, xiii. Reign of Amaziah in Judah, and of Jeroboam II. in Israel, xiv. Reign of Azariah in Judah; reigns of the latter kings of Israel, and of Jotham and Ahaz in Judah, xv. xvi. Reign of Hoshea in Israel; the Israelites led away into captivity by the Assyrians; nations placed in the land; and their religion, xvii.

2. The history of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah.

Good reign of Hezekiah in Judah; invasions of the Assyrians, xviii. God's message to Hezekiah by Isaiah; Sennacherib's letter; Hezekiah's prayer; Isaiah's prophecy; destruction of the Assyrian army, xix. Hezekiah's sickness, and recovery; visit of the Babylonish ambassadors, xx. Wicked reign of Manasseh; prophecy against Judah; reign of Amon, xxi. Josiah's good reign, his reformations, and destruction of idolatry; reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, xxii. xxiii. Invasion of Nebuchadnezzar; siege and plunder of Jerusalem and of the temple; the carrying away of the king and the chief of the people to Babylon, and appointment of Zedekiah as king, xxiv. Nebuchadnezzar's second siege of Jerusalem; burning of the city and temple; carrying away of the treasures; appointment of Gedaliah as ruler, and his death; kindness of the king of Babylon to Jehoiachin in captivity, xxv.

THE BOOKS OF THE CHRONICLES.

These books were anciently reckoned as one by the Jews, by whom they are called "Words of days," that is, *diaries or journals*; probably in allusion to ancient journals, out of which they appear to have been compiled. The appellation of Chronicles was first given to these books by Jerome, because they contain an abstract, in the order of time, of the whole sacred history to the period when they were written. They are generally supposed to have been penned by Ezra, or some later writer, after the Babylonish captivity.

One object of the writer appears to have been to point out from the national records, the state and location of the different families before the captivity; with the view, probably, of their again possessing their respective inheritances, on their return from Babylon. The genealogies, offices, and orders of the priests and Levites are minutely specified; and those portions of the history of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, which illustrate their pious care for the worship of God, are particularly dwelt upon.

One important use of the genealogical tables, is to give the succession of families, through which it had been prophesied that the Messiah was to come. Hence the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are marked with the greatest care.

As the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles relate the same histories, they should be read and collated together; not only to obtain a more comprehensive view of the Jewish history, but also to illustrate from one book what may appear obscure in either of the others.

8. THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

The First Book of Chronicles traces the rise and propagation of the people of Israel from Adam, and afterwards gives a general account of the reign and transactions of David.

Part 1. Contains genealogies from Adam to the time of Ezra, with short historical notices.

Genealogy from Adam to Jacob, ch. i. The sons of Jacob, and genealogy of Judah to David, ii. The posterity of David to Zerubbabel, iii. Genealogies of Judah and Simeon, iv. Genealogies and history of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, v. Genealogy of Levi and Aaron, with the offices and cities of the priests and Levites, vi. Genealogies of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher, vii. Genealogy of Benjamin to Saul, and his descendants, viii. Families, who dwelt at Jerusalem, ix, 1-34. Pedigree of Saul, ix, 34-44.

2. The history of David, beginning with his coming to the throne.

Death of Saul, ch. x. David's accession to the throne, and taking of Jerusalem; his mighty men, xi. xii. Removal of the Ark to the house of Obed-edom, xiii. David's children; his victories, xiv. Removal of the Ark to Jerusalem and setting

in order the worship of God, xv. xvi. David's care for the Ark, and God's message to him by Nathan, xvii. David's victories, xviii.-xx. His numbering of the people, xxi. His preparations for the temple, and instructions to Solomon, and to the princes, xxii. Number and distribution of the Levites and priests, xxiii. xviv.; the singers and musicians, xxv.; the porters, treasures, officers, and judges, xxvi. The captains, princes, and officers, xxvii. David's exhortations to the heads of the people, and to Solomon; offerings of the princes and people for the temple; David's thanksgiving and prayer; enthroning of Solomon xxviii. xxix.

As the histories of the individuals whose names occur in the genealogies in this book will be found in the earlier historical books, particularly in Genesis (many of those mentioned only by name here being fully recorded in Gen. v. x.), the references to them are not repeated here.

9. THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

The Second Book of Chronicles begins with the reign of Solomon; and contains the history of about four hundred and eighty years, till the return of the Jews from Babylon. It agrees very much with the First and Second Books of Kings; except that while in them the histories of Judah and Israel were mixed together, here we have scarcely anything but the history of David's descendants; and we have much relating to them that we had not before.

This Book may be divided into two parts:

Part 1. The history of the united kingdom of Israel and Judah under Solomon.

Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon, his prayer, and choice of wisdom; his wealth and grandeur, ch. i. His treaty with Hiram, ii. Building of the temple, iii. Its furniture, iv. The Ark placed in the temple, v. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, vi. God's answer thereto, vii. Solomon's buildings, &c., viii. Queen of Sheba's visit; Solomon's riches; and death, ix.

2. The history of the kingdom of Judah, from the separation of the ten tribes to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Rehoboam's accession; revolt of the ten tribes, ch. x. Rehoboam's reign in Judah; Shishak's invasion and plundering of

Jerusalem and the temple, xi. xii. Reign of Abijah, xiii, and of Asa, xiv.-xvi. Good reign of Jehoshaphat xvii.-xx. Wicked reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah; Athaliah's usurpation, xxi. xxii. Reign of Joash, xxiii. xxiv.; of Amaziah, xxv.; and of Uzziah, xxvi. Jotham's good reign, xxvii. Wicked reign of Ahaz, xxviii. Hezekiah's good reign, and reformation, xxix.-xxx. Invasion of Sennacherib, and destruction of his army; Hezekiah's sickness, and recovery, xxxii. Manasseh's wickedness, captivity, and repentance; Amon's wicked reign, xxxiii. Josiah's good reign, and zeal for reformation, xxxiv. xxxv. Reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah; destruction of the city and the temple; captivity of the people; proclamation of Cyrus for the restoration of Jerusalem, xxxvi.

NOTE. Events connected with the captivity. The Babylonish captivity was a remarkable, and, at the time it occurred, an unexampled dispensation of Providence. The people of Israel, in the time of the Judges, had often been brought under their enemies; and the ark, the symbol of God's presence, had once forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh, and had been carried away into the land of the Philistines: but the captivity was attended with much heavier calamities. The whole land was now desolated; the ark destroyed; the temple burned to the ground; and the city of Jerusalem laid waste: while the body of the people were delivered into the hands of barbarous enemies, and taken out of their own into a distant country. It is not easy to describe the feelings of distress and amazement of the faithful servants of God whose lot was cast in these dark and calamitous times. But in the short book of the "Lamentations" of the Prophet Jeremiah, who lived in the midst of these scenes, there is a heart-touching memorial of them, which gives a faithful delineation of this visitation, and of its results.

Yet, painful as these events were, they were remarkably overruled for the further development of the purposes of God, and the advancement of true religion. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon tended greatly to cure them of the sin of idolatry, to which they had been addicted for so many ages; a result which all their previous warnings, corrections, and judgments had failed to produce. It also prepared the way for the coming of Christ, and the dispensation of the Gospel, by taking away many of those things wherein consisted the glory of the Jewish dispensation; and by causing the dispersion of the Jews throughout a great part of the known world. Those dispersed Jews, carrying with them the Holy Scriptures containing the prophecies of the Messiah, became the means of diffusing some knowledge of the true religion; and of raising, to some extent, a general expectation of the coming of the Saviour.

This dispersed state of the Jews further conduced to this end, by showing the necessity of abolishing the Jewish dispensation, and of introducing the new Covenant of Grace: for, by the destruction of the temple, and the removal of the Jews from their own land, it became impracticable to them

to observe the laws respecting the offering of sacrifices, and other Divine institutions; which showed the necessity of introducing a new dispensation, that should be fitted, not only to one particular land, but to the general circumstances and use of all nations.

These events were also of great importance, as presenting a striking fulfilment of prophecy. Long before the desolation and captivity of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, their relative destinies had been foretold. When these two kingdoms stood up together at the time of their separation, no human calculation could have determined which would be the more stable or prosperous of the two. That of Samaria seemed rather to have the advantage, considering her greater territory and numbers. But the voice of prophecy decided the question. The three earliest prophets who refer to this subject, Hosea, Amos and Isaiah, all announce the earlier downfall and the utter desolation of Israel. Israel was to be "broken within threescore and five years," and to "cease from being a people," Isa. vii. 6-8; and the Assyrian power was foreshown, by Hosea's prediction, to be the instrument of the Divine judgment, Hos. xi. 5, &c.

The captivity of Judah was first expressly foretold in the reign of Hezekiah, upon the occasion of his displaying to the ambassadors from Babylon his treasures, and the wealth and splendor of his kingdom, Isa. xxxix. 2; 2 Chron. xxxii. 27. And the fulness of the predictions on the subject of the Babylonish captivity is very remarkable. They not only describe the calamity which was about to overwhelm the Jewish people, but they disclose the *reasons and purposes* of God's providence in bringing it to pass. They represent it as a judicial visitation for an extent of sin and corruption not otherwise to be purged away; and as designed, not for punishment to their destruction, but for discipline to repentance and humiliation. They foretell, also, the *time of its continuance*, which they limit to seventy years; and its *issue*; together with the *course of events* by which that issue should be brought to pass. The restoration of Judah, an event so little to be expected, in the ordinary course of things, was foretold as plainly as the captivity. See Isa. xiv. 3; 26-28; xl. 1-4, 13; Jer. xxv. 9-13; xxix. 10-14; l. 4, 5; li.; Ezek. xi. 16, 17; xii. 15; xx. 34.

It is further worthy of notice, how greatly the light of Divine revelation was augmented at this period. While the visible church of God was in its greatest depression, the voice of prophecy was making its largest discoveries upon all the great subjects which it embraced. At the very time when the heathen States and nations seemed to triumph the most in trampling upon the adopted people of God, the revelations of prophecy became most copious and explicit concerning those very States and kingdoms: thus showing God's overruling power over those kingdoms; proving them to be the instruments of his providence; and marking the appointed periods of the rise and fall of many of them. By these means, under the perplexing circumstances of heathen triumph, when the sufferings and fears of God's people were at their greatest height, their minds were directed and comforted.

But, above all, greatly enlarged revelations were made, at this period, concerning the new kingdom and dispensation of God, to be founded by

the advent of the Messiah. The fullest and most expressive discoveries of Gospel blessings were made at the very time when the kingdom of Israel was approaching its ruin. Thus, when the first dispensation began to be shaken, the objects and the promises of the second began to be substituted in its place. The new kingdom, and the new covenant, are set forth to view; and the glorious benefits to be bestowed upon men, through the redemption of Christ, are set in a clearer light than ever before.

During this same period, also, it will be seen, that the prophets bring the idea of religion nearer to the Gospel standard, in a great and material point of view, by explaining the inferior value of the ceremonial law, and giving notice of its future abrogation, Mic. vi. 8 : Hos. vi. 6 ; thus preparing the way for the introduction of the Gospel economy, which sets the ritual law wholly aside, and establishes the moral law forever. This exposition of the principle of religion by the prophets, was also a most seasonable instruction at a time, when, as has been already remarked, the observance of the ritual was rendered difficult or impracticable. When their heathen enemies were about to make a spoil of their land, when access to their temple would be denied them, and the temple itself was about to be destroyed, the servants of God were taught that the personal religion which was still left to them was that which He most esteemed, and had always preferred, Jer. vii. 22. Thus, amidst the judgments of the land, in the decline and anarchy of the temple service, when the public ordinances appointed by the law were impeded, or wholly taken away, the essential principles of religion were invigorated. And we see that, though God's church be cast down, it is not cast off; though his people be corrected, they are not abandoned; though thrown into the furnace, that the dross may be separated, they are not lost there.

10. EZRA.

Ezra, the author of the book which bears his name, was of the sacerdotal family, being a direct descendant from Aaron, and grandson of Seraiah the chief priest. He was one of the captives at Babylon, where he was probably born. He succeeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judea. This book begins with the repetition of the last two verses of the second book of Chronicles, and carries the Jewish history through a period of seventy-nine years, commencing from the edict of Cyrus. It is to be observed, that between the dedication of the temple and the departure of Ezra, that is, between the 6th and 7th chapters of this book, there was an interval of about 58 years, during which nothing is here related concerning the Jews, except that, contrary to God's command, they intermarried with Gentiles. This book is written in Chaldee from the 8th verse of the 4th chapter to the 27th verse of the 7th chapter. It is probable that the sacred historian used the Chaldean

language in this part of his work, because it contains chiefly letters and decrees written in that language, the original words of which he might think it right to record, and indeed the people, who were recently returned from the Babylonian captivity, were at least as familiar with the Chaldee as they were with the Hebrew tongue. The book of Ezra should be read in connection with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, who were raised up to encourage the people in the arduous work of rebuilding the temple.

NOTE. It is recorded by the Jewish writers, that with the assistance of others, also versed in the sacred writings, Ezra collected all the books of which the Holy Scriptures then consisted, disposed them in their proper order, and settled the canon of Scripture; changing the names of some places which had become obsolete; correcting errors which had crept in through the negligence of copyists; adding also, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, whatever was necessary for illustrating or correcting them, and transcribing the whole in the Chaldee character. Thus he publishes a correct edition of the Old Testament, which was subsequently copied and followed with much care, and from hence the copies now extant were taken. As Ezra was himself a writer of the sacred Scriptures, we may be sure that he was guided in his work by the Holy Spirit. The books of Malachi, Nehemia, Esther, and some passages in other books, must have been added subsequently to his time, probably by a succession of pious and learned men, who continued to pay attention to the canon of Scripture, till about the time of Simon the just, who was made high priest about twenty-five years after the death of Alexander the Great, which took place B. C. 323. After that period nothing was added to the canon, or sacred books, of the Old Testament: but even in literal points the greatest vigilance has been exercised by the Jews to preserve them unaltered. Some, however, are of opinion that the whole canon was collected by Ezra, excepting a few additional names and notes; and this accords with the uniform tradition of the Jews.

11. THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

This book takes up the history of the Jews about twelve years after the close of the book of Ezra, and it gives an account of the improvements in the city of Jerusalem, and of the reformations among the people, which were carried on by Nehemiah.

Though a Jew and a captive, Nehemiah had been, through the overruling providence of God, appointed cup-bearer to the king of Persia; an office which was one of the most honorable and confidential at the court. Though thus in the midst of

ease and wealth, yet when he heard of the mournful and desolate condition of his countrymen, he was deeply afflicted by it. He made it the subject of earnest prayer; and after four months, the sadness of his countenance having revealed to the king his sorrow of heart, an opportunity was given him of petitioning the monarch for leave to go to Jerusalem. The king (probably influenced by Esther his queen) appointed Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild the walls, and provide for the welfare of his people, ch. i.; ii. 1-8.

The rebuilding of the city wall was accomplished in fifty and two days, notwithstanding many discouragements and difficulties, caused chiefly by Sanballat the Moabite and Tobiah the Ammonite, who were leading men in the rival and unfriendly colony of Samaria; who first scoffed at the attempt, then threatened to attack the workmen, and finally used various stratagems to weaken Nehemiah's authority, and even to take his life. It appears also that some of the chief men in Jerusalem were at that time in conspiracy with Tobiah against Nehemiah, ch. ii. 9-20; iii.-vi. That the wall was built in "troublous time," Dan. ix. 23; and its completion was joyously celebrated by a solemn dedication under Nehemiah's direction, ch. xii. 27-43.

Nehemiah then turned his attention to other measures for the public good. He appointed some necessary officers, ch. vii. 13; xii. 44-47; and excited among the people more interest and zeal in religion, by the public reading and exposition of the law; by an unexampled celebration of the feast of tabernacles, and the observance of a national fast; and by inducing the people to enter into a solemn covenant "to walk in God's law," by avoiding intermarriages with the heathen; by strictly observing the Sabbath; and by contributing to the support of the people, ch. viii.-x.

The inhabitants of the city being as yet to few to defend it, and to insure its property, Nehemiah brought one out of every ten in the country to take up his abode in the ancient capital, which then presented so few inducements to the settler, that "the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem," ch. vii. 4; xi. 1-19. In all these important public proceedings, Nehemiah appears to have enjoyed the assistance of Ezra.

12. THE BOOKS OF ESTHER.

Some suppose this book was written by Mordecai; but the more probable opinion (and which may account for the omission of the name of God) is, that it is a translated extract from the memoirs or records of the reign of the Persian monarch, Ahasuerus. The Asiatic sovereigns, it is well known, caused annals of their reigns to be kept. Numerous passages in the Books of Kings and Chronicles prove that the kings of Israel and Judah had such annals. And this book itself attests that Ahasuerus had similar historical records, ch. ii. 23; vi. 1; from which it appears probable that this history of the Jews, under queen Esther, might be derived, and to which the author of this book appears to make an appeal in ch. x. 2. This would account for the retaining of the Persian word *Purim*, ch. x. 24-32; for the details given concerning the empire of Ahasuerus; and for the exactness with which the names of his ministers and of Haman's sons are recorded; also for the Jews being mentioned only in the third person, and Esther being frequently designated by the title of "the queen," and Mordecai by the epithet of "the Jew." It would also account for those numerous parentheses which we find in the course of the narrative; the object of which appears to have been to give illustrations necessary for a Jewish reader; and for the abrupt termination of the narrative, by one sentence relative to the power of Ahasuerus, and another concerning Mordecai's greatness. The history here recorded comes in between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra.

NOTE. *The state of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity.* The master sin of the Jewish nation, idolatry, appears to have been effectually cured by the captivity in Babylon. It is not, indeed, to be supposed that all the exiles who there learned the folly of worshipping idols, became spiritual worshippers of Jehovah; but the nation never again fell into that sin, to which before they had been so prone; and though all who were reformed, were not converted, the season of affliction proved a season of special grace to many. It is evident that, on their restoration to their own land, there was much of the vitality of religion amongst them. Many circumstances evince that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, their hearts were turned to Him who had chastened them for their good. But towards the close of the government of Nehemiah, the ardor of religious feeling and conduct began to wane. This appears especially from Malachi, the last of the prophets. A great declension took place, till a severe persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes was made, by the agency of Divine grace, the means

of rekindling for a short time the almost extinguished spark of spiritual life. But they gradually fell into new ways of perverting religion. This they did, more particularly, by laying all the stress on the external and less momentous parts of it; and wholly neglecting the weighty and substantial —true holiness of heart and life: making religion to consist in mere profession, or in the zealous observance of rites and ceremonies, instead of real piety, truth, purity, and holiness: also by speculating and refining upon the Divine commandments and institutions, till their force was quite destroyed and further, by setting up the authority of human traditions, and the doctrines and commandments of learned rabbins; so making the Word of God of none effect. This became the general state of religion among the Jews, for several centuries before the coming of the Messiah; though they still continued steadfast in the outward worship of the true God.

III. THE POETICAL BOOKS.

The division of the Holy Scriptures usually called the poetical books, comprises the following: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, or the Song of Solomon. In point of date, some portions of them are earlier, and others are later, than many parts of the historical books; but they are classed by themselves, as being almost wholly composed in Hebrew verse. In the Jewish Canon of Scripture, they are called "Hagiography," or, Holy Writings; the other two portions of the Old Testament being called respectively, the Law and the Prophets. The writings of the prophets are, for the most part, also in a poetical form.

The peculiar excellence of the Hebrew poetry is to be ascribed to the employment of it in the noblest service, that of religion. It presents the loftiest and most precious truths, expressed in the most appropriate language. To celebrate the praises of Jehovah in hymns and songs — to invest the worship of the Most High with the charms and graces of harmony — to give energy to the devout affections — was the sublime employment of the poets of Israel.

1. THE BOOK OF JOB.

This book derives its name from the venerable patriarch, whose prosperity, afflictions, and restoration from adversity it records. It presents many interesting subjects of inquiry, some of which are confessedly difficult and obscure, and have

greatly exercised the ingenuity of commentators. The following remarks contain all that is considered necessary to state here respecting the more important of them.

That Job was a real person, and that the events of his life, here narrated, actually occurred, may be inferred from the manner in which he is spoken of in other passages of Scripture, Ez. xiv. 14; Jam. v. 11. In addition to which, there is internal evidence, from the particular details given of names of persons, places, &c.

The country which Job inhabited is not easily determined; but it was probably in the northern part of Arabia Deserta.

We have still greater difficulty in ascertaining the age in which Job lived. Many circumstances, however, lead us to conclude that it was before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. Some consider it to have been shortly before that event; others suppose that it was at a considerably earlier period, not far from the age of Abraham, or even before that.

Eusebius fixes the age when Job lived two ages before Moses, i. e. about the time of Isaac; 1800 years before Christ, and 600 after the Deluge. Agreeing with this are the following considerations: 1. Job's length of life is patriarchal, 200 years. 2. He alludes only to the earliest form of idolatry, *viz.* the worship of the sun, moon, and heavenly hosts (called Saba, whence arises the title, Lord of Sabaoth, as opposed to Sabeanism), ch. xxxi. 26-28. 3. The number of oxen and rams sacrificed, seven, as in the case of Balaam. God would not have sanctioned this after the giving of the Mosaic law, though He might graciously accommodate Himself to existing customs before the law. 4. The language of Job is Hebrew, interpersed occasionally with Syriac and Arabic expressions, implying a time when all the Shemitic tribes spoke one common tongue and had not branched into different dialects, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic. 5. He speaks of the most ancient kind of writing, *viz.*, sculpture. Riches also are reckoned by cattle. The Hebrew word translated a piece of money, ought rather to be rendered a lamb. 6. There is no allusion to the Exodus from Egypt and to the miracles that accompanied it: nor to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; though there is to the flood, ch. xxii. 15; and these events, happening in Job's vicinity, would have been striking illustrations of the argument for God's interposition in destroying the wicked and

vindicating the righteous, had Job and his friends known of them. Nor is there any undoubted reference to the Jewish law, ritual, and priesthood. 7. The religion of Job is that which prevailed among the patriarchs previous to the law; sacrifices performed by the head of each family; no officiating priesthood, temple, or consecrated altar.

Respecting the author of the book, a difference of opinion prevails. Some ascribe it to Job, others to Elihu, and others to Moses. Whoever was its author, its canonical authority is proved by its place in the Jewish Scriptures, and the recognition of the whole collection by our Lord and His Apostles.

2. THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

This book is entitled, in the Hebrew, "The Book of Praises;" because many of these beautiful compositions are songs of praise, intended to be used in Divine worship. The name of Psalms was given to them on account of their being adapted to be sung to music. They are sometimes called "The Psalter," from the psaltery, a musical instrument used to accompany them when sung. The inscriptions to most of the Psalms show their connexion with music.

The titles of the Psalms sometimes have reference to a choice of tunes, or instruments, or contain some directions to persons appointed to set them to music, or to the leaders of the choir, or something peculiar in the subject, season, or style of the composition. The conjectures as to their meaning are various.

This book was once published in five parts, each concluding with a doxology, viz. i.-xli; xlii.-lxxii; lxxiii.-lxxxix; xc.-cvi; cvii.-cl; but it is cited as one book, Luke xx. 42.

They are commonly called "The Psalms of David," because the greater part of them are ascribed to him as their author.

Many are of opinion that David collected such as were extant in his time, into a book for use in the public worship of God, and we read 2 Chr. xxix. 30, of such a collection being used in the time of Hezekiah. But as many of the Psalms were written after these dates, it is probable that the different collections which had been previously made, were formed into one volume by Ezra and his contemporaries, about B. C. 450, when the Jewish Canon of Scripture was completed.

To most of the Psalms are prefixed inscriptions or titles, concerning the import of which, expositors are by no means agreed. Some of these titles are certainly not of equal antiquity with the text: others of them are regarded as canonical parts of Scripture. Their design appears to be, in some cases, to specify either the author, subject, or occasion, of the Psalm. In other instances they appear to refer to the style of poetry, or of music; or the class of singers to whom they were allotted in the temple service. All knowledge of the temple music having been now lost, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to explain all the terms employed in these inscriptions. Our translators have generally retained the Hebrew words.

Fifteen Psalms (cxx.-cxxiv.) are called "Songs of Degrees," or, as the words are rendered in the Septuagint, "Songs of the steps." The probable opinion is that the title signifies "Song of the ascents;" meaning a song sung during the journeyings of the people up to Jerusalem at the annual festivals.

Selah is found seventy-three times in the Psalms, generally at the end of a sentence or paragraph. It is generally supposed to be both a musical note, and a note of emphasis in the sense. In the Septuagint it is rendered by a word which signifies a rest or pause, or a change of the modulation.

The contents of the Psalms are very various. Some of them are expressions of praise and adoration, and set forth the majesty, power, goodness, and other attributes of God. Others are songs of thanksgiving for mercies received. Others are prayers for the mercy of God; the pardon of sin; or deliverance from danger or affliction; while in others intercession is made for the church and for the world. Some of the Psalms are historical, written to preserve the remembrance of the most considerable events which befell the Jewish nation; and it should be observed, that what is historical, as it relates to David and the ancient Church, is usually typical, and so prophetical, as it relates to Christ and the Gospel dispensation. Others describe the excellency of God's law, the character of good and bad men, and the vanity of human life. Lastly, some are more entirely prophetical; containing many illustrious predictions concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and Gospel times and blessings.

CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE PSALMS.

Date.	Number.	Writer.	Probable occasion.
A. M.			
2473	88.....	Heman	Affliction of Israel in Egypt.
2514	90.....	Moses	Shortening of man's life.
2941	9.....	David	Victory over Goliath.
2942	11.....	—	Advised to flee to the mountains.
—	59.....	—	Saul's soldiers surrounding his house.
—	56.....	—	With the Philistines at Gath.
—	34.....	—	Leaving the city of Gath.
—	142.....	—	In the cave of Adullam.
—	17.....	—	Priests murdered by Doeg.
—	52. 109. 35. 140.....	—	Persecution by Doeg.
2943	64. 31.....	—	Persecution by Saul.
—	54.....	—	Treachery of the Ziphites.
—	57. 58.....	—	Refusal to kill Saul.
—	63.....	—	In the wilderness of Engedi.
2946	141.....	—	Driven out of Judea.
2956	139.....	—	King of Israel.
2962	68.....	—	First removal of the ark.
—	24. 132. 105. 96. 106.....	—	Second removal of the ark.
—	2. 45. 22. 16. 118. 110.....	—	Nathan's prophetic address.
2964	60. 108.....	—	Conquest of Syria and Edom by Joab.
2968	20. 21.....	—	War with the Ammonites & Syrians.
2970	{ 6. 51. 32. 38. 39. 40. 41. 103. }.....	—	Adultery, and murder of Uriah.
2983	3. 7.....	—	Flight from Absalom.
—	{ 42. 43. 55. 4. 5. 62. 143. 144. 70. 71. }.....	—	Near Jordan, the flight from Absalom.
2986	18.....	—	Conclusion of his wars.
2987	30.....	—	Dedic. of Araunah's threshing floor.
2989	91.....	—	After his advice to Solomon.
—	72.....	—	Coronation of Solomon.
—	145.....	—	A review of his past life.
—	{ 8. 12. 19. 23. 26. 27. 28. 29. 33. 61. 65. 69. 86. 95. 101. 104. 120. 121. 122. (124. 131. 133. }.....	—	Occasion and dates unknown.
3000	47. 97. 98. 99. 100.....	Solomon	Removal of the ark into the temple.
—	135. 136.....	—	Dedication of the temple.
3074	78.....	Asaph	Asa's victory over Israel.
3108	82. 115. 46.....	{ Asaph and others..... }	The reign of Jehoshaphat.
3294	44.....	Hezekiah	The blasphemy of Rab-shakeh.
3416	73. 75. 76.....	Asaph	Destruction of Sennacherib's army.
—	74. 79. 83. 94.....	—	Burning of the temple at Jerusalem.
3463	{ 37. 67. 49. 53. 50. 10. 13. 14. }.....	Asaph, Ethan and others }	During the Babylonian captivity.
3465	15. 25. 36. 89. 92. 93. 123.....	—	
3466	102.....	Daniel	Near the close of the captivity.
3468	126. 85.....	{ Sons of Korah }	The decree of Cyrus for restoring the Jews.
—	{ 107. 87. 111. 112. 113. 114. 116. 117. 125. 127. 128. 134. }.....	Various.....	The return of the Jews from captivity.
3469	84. 66.....	{ Sons of Korah }	Foundation of the second temple.
3470	129.....	{ Ezra or Nehemiah }	Opposition of the Samaritans.
3485	138.....	{ Haggai or Zechariah }	Rebuilding of the temple.
3489	{ 48. 81. 146. 147. (148. 149. 150...) }.....	Various.....	Dedication of the second temple.
3560	1. 119.....	{ Ezra. Some think, David. }	Manual of devotion.

3. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

The Book of Proverbs of Solomon appears to have been arranged in its present order by different persons; but there is every reason to believe that all its contents, with the exception of the last two chapters, were written by Solomon, or adopted by him.

This book is a manual of practical rules of life, as the Psalms are a manual of daily devotion; the former guiding the actions; the latter the thoughts. It is a book of daily lessons for all the ages and states of men and women. "Wisdom" is religion, and "folly" is irreligion.

Solomon lays down this principle as the foundation of all his instructions, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," ch. i. 7; ix. 10: thus teaching us that there is no true wisdom without godliness, and that there can be no virtue in our intercourse with our fellow creatures, where this is wanting as the motive of action.

The magnificent description of Wisdom contained in ch. i. 20-23; viii., and ix., is considered to apply to the wisdom of God revealed to us in the Gospel of his Son; and even to the Son himself, as the eternal Word and Wisdom, (Compare ch. viii. with John i. 1; xiv. 10); and we can discern in this book the dawn of that light and immortality which are fully revealed by the Gospel of Christ. See ch. iv. 18; xii. 28; xiv. 32; xv. 24.

This book may be divided into five distinct parts:

1. A continuous discourse addressed to the young on the advantages of wisdom, and the mischievous consequences of sin, ch. i.-ix.

2. A series of unconnected maxims on various subjects, ch. x.-xxii. 16.

3. Another discourse, embracing a variety of subjects, in a style somewhat resembling that of the first part, ch. xxii. 16-xxiv.

4. A collection of Solomon's Proverbs, made in the time of Hezekiah, consisting of unconnected sentences, ch. xxv.-xxix.

5. The remainder of the book (ch. xxx. xxxi.) contains precepts delivered by Agur, and admonitions given to king Lemuel by his mother. Who these persons were is not known. The thirtieth chapter affords an example of a species of writing closely allied to the proverb, and equally in favor among

the Orientals, namely, that of riddles or enigmas, designed to exercise the ingenuity of the hearer, and to impart instruction through that medium. The concluding chapter presents a striking picture of female excellence adapted to that age and country.

4. ECCLESIASTES, OR THE PREACHER.

The name of this book, which is derived from the Greek version, signifies "the Preacher;" and the Hebrew title is similar. It is generally supposed to have been written by Solomon towards the close of his life.

Here we have an account of the operations of Solomon's own mind, — a narrative of what he had seen, thought, and felt, purposed and accomplished, during his eventful life, and the conclusions to which he was solemnly brought at the close of it. He makes full confession of his errors and wanderings, and the pain which they had occasioned him, and faithfully warns others not to follow in his steps.

The Canonicity of this book is acknowledged by Jews and early Christian writers; but the former did not rank it amongst the poetical books, the major part of it being prose.

One great design of this book evidently is to correct the common and fatal delusion of supposing the things of this world to be sufficient for our happiness, and to draw men off from the pursuit of this apparent good to the real and only permanent source of happiness — the fear of God and communion with him. It describes the whole sum of human life, with its changes and vanities, its occupations, plans, speculations, and pleasures. It shows, from the example of Solomon, the impossibility of deriving solid satisfaction from wealth, or honor, or power, or sensual pleasure, or outward magnificence, or from all these combined. At the same time it sets before us that which alone is really satisfying and lasting; and it reminds us that man in the midst of temporary enjoyments should never forget the future consequences of his doings, and the account which he must render to his Creator and Judge.

5. THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

The universal voice of antiquity declares that the writer of this ancient poem was Solomon; and internal evidence confirms the testimony. His songs, we read, were a thousand and five, 1 Ki. iv. 32.

It is said to be the only remaining one of the thousand and five songs (in the Hebrew idiom it is called the Song of Songs or the best of them all); and both Jewish and Christian tradition agree in this. It has been thought to have been a Marriage Ode composed by him at his nuptials with the daughter of Pharaoh.

But whatever the original occasion and the primary meaning of this poem may have been, it has been considered, from the earliest age of the Church, as representing, under a mystical allegory, the mutual love of Jehovah and his Church, under the figure of the endearing relation of a bridegroom and his bride; a mode of speaking of which the sacred writers furnish many other examples. See especially Psalm xlv., which, in many respects, much resembles the Song of Songs; Is. liv. 5, 6; Ixii. 5; Jer. ii.; iii. 1; and many passages in Ezekiel and Hosea, where this figure is employed with great force and freedom; also the language of John the Baptist in John iii. 29; and of our Lord himself, Matt. ix. 15; xxv. 1. See further, Eph. v. 27; Rev. xxi. 2, 9.

That it is in the highest degree figurative, must be allowed; but whether it is to be regarded as a poem, or a series of poems; or as a nuptial dialogue, or as a drama, is not determined. The prevailing opinion is, that the book consists of twelve distinct poems or idyls, such as are common among Arabian poets. and that it should be divided thus:

Idyl 1.....	Cha.	i. 1-8.
2.....		i. 9-ii. 7.
3.....		ii. 8-17.
4.....		iii. 1-5.
5.....		iii. 6-iv. 7.
6.....		iv. 8-v. 1.
7.....		v. 2-vi. 10.
8.....		vi. 11-13.
9.....		vii. 1-9.
10.....		vii. 10-viii. 4
11.....		viii. 5-7.
12.....		viii. 8-14.



IV. THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

In the earlier ages of the world, God had been pleased to inspire with the gift of prophecy different persons in various countries, and for purposes more or less extensive in his moral government. Such were Enoch, Noah, Jacob, Moses, Balaam, and others. But in the Jewish economy the prophetic office had a more definite work assigned to it. Young men were trained for its duties; and from this class generally, but not always, did the Holy Spirit select those who were distinguished by the gift of miraculous inspiration (1 Sam. x. 5, 10, 11; 2 Ki. ii. 3, 5; iv. 38), and employed in declaring the Divine will. These were also called seers and men of God. They fearlessly rebuked all violations of the Mosaic covenant — the apostasy, idolatry, and superstition of kings and princes, — the oppression, venality, perfidy, and cruelty of magistrates, — the corruption and time-serving of priests, and the prevalent iniquities of the people. They gave religious instruction, cultivated devotional poetry and music, and composed the national histories, which are therefore classed by the writers of the New Testament with the writings of the prophets, Luke xxiv. 44. They appear to have been men of blameless character, simple, and even austere, in their habits of life. They carried the messages of God impartially to the highest and the lowest. The best kings of Israel and Judah paid them eminent respect, while the worst dreaded and often persecuted them. They were sometimes maligned and opposed by pretenders, who are mentioned in the historical and prophetic books under the description of false, lying, and deceitful prophets.

Considerable portions of these books are not prophetic, in the sense of foretelling future events. They contain historical narratives, delineations of character, moral and religious instruction, arguments and warnings against sin, earnest exhortations to holiness, and elevated devotional sentiment, adapted to every variety of circumstance and condition. Thus there is a continued stream of moral doctrine running through these books, which is a step in progress beyond the law, and preparatory to the Gospel. It goes beyond the law in respect

of the greater distinctness and fullness of some of its doctrines and precepts. It is a more perfect exposition of the principles of personal holiness. Its sanctions have less of reference to temporal rewards and punishments, and supply more of evangelical motive.

The study of prophecy, Davison well observes, is a field of inquiry which "has been rich in its produce, like one which God hath blessed; for the produce has proved that it was first sown and prepared by Him, though the inferior cultivators have not always agreed well together; and some few of them, with too forward a zeal, have put in the sickle before the grain was ripe; and, so far, by their unskillful husbandry, have discredited the harvest." It is a study which requires great caution and sound judgment; but if pursued in a modest and candid spirit, and in a due proportion to the other departments of sacred knowledge, it will be found highly profitable. It illustrates God's universal providence; it confirms by the most decisive proof the reality of revealed religion; it establishes many important rules for the interpretation of the Bible generally; and it furnishes a rich abundance of materials and motives for devotion.

In studying the prophecies, we should remember that God gave them, "not to gratify men's curiosity, by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own providence, not the interpreter's, be then manifested thereby to the world."

In reference to the interpretation of the prophetical Scriptures, the following general rules will be useful for ascertaining their meaning and application:

1. It is requisite to acquire full and correct information concerning the life and circumstances of the prophet whose writings are under consideration, the history of the times in which he lived, the condition and relations of the people to whom his messages were addressed, and the part which he took in the public affairs of his country.
2. After obtaining a general idea of the contents of each prophetical book, it is important to distribute the matter which it contains into separate portions. There is scarcely one of the books of the prophets that does not comprise a number of parts, complete in themselves, distinct from the others, delivered at different

times, and connected with entirely different circumstances. The form in which they are here presented, unbroken by the divisions of chapters and verses, will make their continuity more apparent, and the sense more clear. 3. Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the prophecies are generally written in the highest style of poetry, with the most vivid imagery, the boldest figures, and all the peculiarities of poetical composition. Hence the events which are the subjects of prediction are described in figures and metaphors derived from all the sources of poetic imagery; and particularly from the occupations of the people to whom they were delivered, from the events of their history, and from all the beauty and majesty of nature in a mountainous and maritime country; and are much more clearly understood by those who possess some knowledge of the customs and manners of the East. 4. It is necessary to be acquainted with the nature and meaning of the emblematical imagery used by the prophets. The Holy Spirit was pleased to make use of symbols, or emblematical resemblances, as the representatives of persons, offices, and communities. These are constructed upon a systematic plan; the same image ordinarily referring to the same object. They are derived from various sources, but generally from familiar and impressive objects in nature. 5. Different portions of the same prophet, or of different prophets, which refer to the same subject, should be diligently compared, their agreements or apparent disagreements carefully noted, and the interpretation of each observed for the mutual illustration of the whole.

1. ISAIAH.

Isaiah prophesied during the time that the kingdom of Israel was governed by a succession of wicked princes, and had sunk into deep depravity, and a large portion of the inhabitants removed to a distant country. Comparatively few of his predictions respecting the Hebrew nation are addressed to the people of Israel; most of them having reference to the kingdom of Judah. This kingdom also had lost much of its splendor and magnificence, since the reigns of David and Solomon. It had been greatly weakened by the revolt of the ten tribes, and by the wars in which it had been engaged. Though its kings were superior in virtue and piety to those of Israel, yet many of them had been vicious and unworthy descendants of

David, and their conduct had brought down upon them the Divine displeasure.

When Isaiah entered on his office, the throne was occupied by Uzziah, or Azariah. His general character was that of integrity and piety; and under his reign the nation enjoyed great temporal prosperity. He was a worshipper of the true God; yet he did not remove the groves and high places established for idolatrous worship. Uzziah was succeeded by his son Jotham, whose general character was like that of his father; but the idolatrous altars were still allowed to remain, and owing to the increase of luxury and sensual indulgence, true piety declined more and more. The next king, Ahaz, was a very wicked and idolatrous prince; and his reign was very disastrous. The law of God was broken in the most reckless manner, and the temple not only defaced and plundered, but, at last, shut up. During this period, Isaiah came forward publicly, as a reprobate of sin; but his counsels and warnings were disregarded. Hezekiah's character was the reverse of that of his father. He abolished idolatry, restored the temple and worship of Jehovah, and relieved the people from foreign oppression. He treated Isaiah with great respect, and during the agitating occurrences of his reign, the prophet had an important part in directing the public counsels. A large part of his prophecies are supposed to have been delivered during this reign, from ch. xiii. to ch. xxxix. If the prophet lived in the time of Manasseh, it is probable that he had retired from public life, and that his main employment was to contemplate the glorious visions relating to the happier times of the world, which constitute the close of his prophecies, ch. xl.-lxv.

Isaiah was contemporary with the prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Their writings, particularly those of Micah, assist in elucidating his book.

Isaiah stands preëminent above all the other prophets, as well in the contents and spirit of his predictions, as in their form and style. Simplicity, clearness, beauty, and energy are the neverfailing characteristics of his writings; whilst there is a great variety in the style, always adapted to his particular subject. But the interest and value of this book are derived from the truths and predictions it contains, rather than from the beauties of expression and imagery. Isaiah has been well denominated the evangelical prophet, on account of the full

and numerous prophecies concerning the advent, the character, the ministry, the sufferings and death of the Messiah, and the extent and permanency of his kingdom. His writings are accordingly more frequently alluded to in the New Testament than those of any other of the prophets.

2. JEREMIAH.

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin. He was called to the prophetic office about seventy years after the death of Isaiah, in the thirteenth year of king Josiah, whilst he was very young (ch. i. 6), and still living at Anathoth. It would seem that he remained in his native place for several years; but at length, probably in consequence of the persecution of his fellow townsmen, and even of his own family (ch. xi. 21; xii. 6), as well as, under the Divine direction, to have a wider field for his labors, he left Anathoth, and came to Jerusalem.

During the reign of Josiah, he was, doubtless, a valuable coadjutor to that pious monarch in the reformation of religion: but when Jehoiakim came to the throne, he was quickly interrupted in his ministry; "the priests and prophets" becoming his accusers, and demanding, in conjunction with the populace, that he should be put to death as a denouncer of woe against the city, ch. xxvi. The princes did not dare to defy God thus openly; but Jeremiah was either placed under restraint, or deterred by his adversaries from appearing in public. Under these circumstances he received a command from God to commit his predictions to writing; and having done so, sent Baruch to read them in the temple on a fast day. The princes were alarmed, and endeavored to rouse the king by reading out to him the prophetic roll. But it was in vain: the reckless monarch, after hearing three or four pages, cut the roll in pieces, and cast it into the fire, giving immediate orders for the apprehension of Jeremiah and Baruch. God, however, preserved them; and Jeremiah soon afterwards, by Divine direction, wrote the same messages again, with some additions, ch. xxxvi.

In the short reign of the next king, Jehoiachin, we find him still uttering the voice of warning (see ch. xiii. 18; comp. 2 Ki. xviv. 12; and ch. xii. 24-30), though without effect.

In the reign of Zedekiah, when Nebuchadnezzar's army laid siege to Jerusalem, and then withdrew upon the report of help coming from Egypt, Jeremiah was commissioned by God to declare that the Chaldeans should come again, and take the city, and burn it with fire. Departing from Jerusalem, he was accused of deserting to the Chaldeans, and was cast into prison, where he remained until the city was taken. Nebuchadnezzar, who had formed a more just estimate of his character, gave a special charge to his captain, Nebuzaradan, not only to provide for him, but follow his advice. The choice being given to the prophet, either to go to Babylon, where doubtless he would have been held in honor at the royal court, or to remain with his own people, he preferred the latter. He subsequently endeavored to persuade the leaders of the people not to go to Egypt, but to remain in the land; assuring them, by a Divine message, that if they did so God would build them up. The people refused to obey; and went to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them, ch. xlivi. 6. In Egypt he still sought to turn the people to the Lord, ch. xliv.; but his writings give no information respecting his subsequent history. Ancient historians, however, assert that the Jews, offended by his faithful remonstrances, put him to death in Egypt.

His prophecies are not in chronological order, but seem to have been re-arranged according to their subjects, viz.: 1. Warnings to the Jews. 2. Survey of all nations, with a historical appendix. 3. Prediction of brighter days to come, with a similar appendix. 4. Prophecies regarding Egypt. The concluding chapters (from li, 34) are supposed to have been compiled from the later portions of II. Kings, and may have been added by Ezra. Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel and Daniel. He foretold the precise date of the captivity, the fate of Zedekiah, the return of the Jews, future decay of Babylon, and fall of many other nations. He is said to have buried the ark; and he predicted the abrogation of the Law, the inauguration of a spiritual worship, the blessing of the Atonement; the call of the Gentiles through the Gospel, and the final acceptance of the Jews.

3. THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

This book is a kind of appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah; it expresses with pathetic tenderness the prophet's grief for the desolation of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the captivity of the people, the miseries of famine, the cessation of public worship, and the other calamities with which his countrymen had been visited for their sins. The leading object was, to teach the suffering Jews neither "to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor to faint when rebuked of Him;" but to turn to God with deep repentance, to confess their sins, and humbly look to Him alone for pardon and deliverance.

The form of these poems is strictly regular. With the exception of the last (ch. v.) they are in the original Hebrew alphabetical acrostics, in which every stanza begins with a new letter. The third has this further peculiarity, that all the three lines in each stanza have the same letter at the commencement.

As a composition, this book is remarkable for the great variety of pathetic images it contains: all expressive of the deepest sorrow, and worthy of the subject which they are designed to illustrate.

4. EZEKIEL.

Ezekiel was, like Jeremiah, a priest as well as a prophet. He was among the first of those carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon with Jehoiachin, king of Judah. All his prophecies appear to have been delivered in that country, at some place on the river Chebar, (now Khabur), which flows into the Euphrates about two hundred miles north of Babylon. Ezekiel was called to exercise the prophetic office in the fifth year of the captivity, about six years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and he continued to prophesy for about twenty-two years. It appears that he remained with his exiled countrymen by the river Chebar during the rest of his life. That he exercised great influence over them is manifest from the intimations we have of the elders coming to inquire what message God had sent through him.

Jerome observes that the visions of Ezekiel are among the things in Scripture hard to be understood. This obscurity arises, in part at least, from the nature and design of the

In the reign of Zedekiah, when Nebuchadnezzar's army laid siege to Jerusalem, and then withdrew upon the report of help coming from Egypt, Jeremiah was commissioned by God to declare that the Chaldeans should come again, and take the city, and burn it with fire. Departing from Jerusalem, he was accused of deserting to the Chaldeans, and was cast into prison, where he remained until the city was taken. Nebuchadnezzar, who had formed a more just estimate of his character, gave a special charge to his captain, Nebuzaradan, not only to provide for him, but follow his advice. The choice being given to the prophet, either to go to Babylon, where doubtless he would have been held in honor at the royal court, or to remain with his own people, he preferred the latter. He subsequently endeavored to persuade the leaders of the people not to go to Egypt, but to remain in the land; assuring them, by a Divine message, that if they did so God would build them up. The people refused to obey; and went to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them, ch. xlivi. 6. In Egypt he still sought to turn the people to the Lord, ch. xliv.; but his writings give no information respecting his subsequent history. Ancient historians, however, assert that the Jews, offended by his faithful remonstrances, put him to death in Egypt.

His prophecies are not in chronological order, but seem to have been re-arranged according to their subjects, viz.: 1. Warnings to the Jews. 2. Survey of all nations, with a historical appendix. 3. Prediction of brighter days to come, with a similar appendix. 4. Prophecies regarding Egypt. The concluding chapters (from li, 34) are supposed to have been compiled from the later portions of II. Kings, and may have been added by Ezra. Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel and Daniel. He foretold the precise date of the captivity, the fate of Zedekiah, the return of the Jews, future decay of Babylon, and fall of many other nations. He is said to have buried the ark; and he predicted the abrogation of the Law, the inauguration of a spiritual worship, the blessing of the Atonement; the call of the Gentiles through the Gospel, and the final acceptance of the Jews.

3. THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

This book is a kind of appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah; it expresses with pathetic tenderness the prophet's grief for the desolation of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the captivity of the people, the miseries of famine, the cessation of public worship, and the other calamities with which his countrymen had been visited for their sins. The leading object was, to teach the suffering Jews neither "to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor to faint when rebuked of Him;" but to turn to God with deep repentance, to confess their sins, and humbly look to Him alone for pardon and deliverance.

The form of these poems is strictly regular. With the exception of the last (ch. v.) they are in the original Hebrew alphabetical acrostics, in which every stanza begins with a new letter. The third has this further peculiarity, that all the three lines in each stanza have the same letter at the commencement.

As a composition, this book is remarkable for the great variety of pathetic images it contains: all expressive of the deepest sorrow, and worthy of the subject which they are designed to illustrate.

4. EZEKIEL.

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prophecies themselves: they were delivered amidst the gloom of captivity; and though calculated to cheer the drooping spirits of the Jews, and to keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence in the mercy of God, yet they were intended to communicate only such a degree of encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and to excite an indistinct expectation of future blessings, upon conditions of repentance and amendment. It ought also to be observed, that the last 12 chapters of this book bear a very strong resemblance to the concluding chapters of the revelation. The style of this prophet is characterized by Bishop Lowth as bold, vehement, and tragical, as often worked up to a kind of tremendous dignity. He is highly parabolical, and abounds in figures and metaphorical expressions. He may be compared to the Grecian *Æschylus*: he displays a rough but majestic dignity, an unpolished though noble simplicity, inferior perhaps in originality and elegance to others of the prophets, but unequalled in that force and grandeur for which he is particularly celebrated. He sometimes emphatically and indignantly repeats his sentiments, fully dilates his pictures, and describes the idolatrous manner of his countrymen, under the strongest and most exaggerated representations that the license of Eastern style would admit. The middle part of the book is in some measure poetical, and contains even some perfect elegies, though his thoughts are in general too irregular and uncontrolled to be chained down to rule, or fettered by language.

5. THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

Daniel was of noble birth, if not of the royal family of Judah. He was young when carried captive to Babylon, with other Hebrew youths of rank, to be educated for the service of Nebuchadnezzar's court; on which occasion he received, according to Eastern custom, the Chaldean name of Belteshazzar. He was instructed in the Chaldean language, in which the most learned writings of the time were written; and soon became distinguished for wisdom and piety. At the end of three years of study, he was admitted to the number of the Magi, or wise men; and shortly after, having, by Divine teaching, interpreted a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, he rose into high favor with that monarch, and was made ruler of the

province of Babylon, and chief of the order of wise men, ch. ii.

Being called upon at a later period to interpret another dream of the same king, we find Daniel uniting the utmost loyalty, and anxiety for the welfare of his princely benefactor, with the energy and fidelity becoming his position as a prophet of Jehovah, ch. iv.

There is no further account of him until the first and third years of Belshazzar, when by two remarkable visions, the future course of events, and the ultimate fates of the most powerful empires of the world were disclosed to him; with their relations to the kingdom of God, and its progress until the great end of all things, ch. vii. viii.

After the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, Daniel, deeply concerned for his people, and knowing that the period of their exile was nearly concluded, according to the prophecies of Jeremiah, gave himself to prayer in their behalf; when he received in answer Divine revelations and promises, far exceeding the tenor of his petitions, and relating to matters extending to the very end of time, ch. ix.

Under the reigns of Darius and Cyrus, Daniel filled the highest posts of honor in the State. He was then attacked by the envy and jealousy of his colleagues, who contrived a snare for him from his acts of devotion, and thus gave occasion to the memorable interposition of Providence recorded in the sixth chapter.

In the third year of Cyrus Daniel had a series of visions, in which he was informed of many important particulars in the future history of his nation and of the world, ch. x.-xii. He lived to see the fulfillment of his most ardent wishes, in the restoration of his people to their own land, though he did not join them in their return.

This book consists of two distinct volumes, the prophecies of the latter being synchronous with some of the historical events narrated in the former, e. g. the first vision occurred in the first year of Belshazzar, b. c. 555; the second in 553; the third in the first year of Darius 538; the last in the third of Cyrus 534.

The historical part, ch. ii. 4.-vii., is in Chaldee; the prophetic in Hebrew. In the former Daniel is spoken of in the third person, in the latter in the first; but of both portions he is allowed to have been the author. Our Lord speaks of him

as a prophet, Matt. xxiv. 15. An allusion is made to him in Heb. xi. 33, 34; and his language is copied in the revelation of John the Divine, which is the counterpart of his book in the New Testament.

Ch. ii. predicts the course of the Five Great Empires of the world, which should succeed each other in supremacy—viz: the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, and Christian. In ch. vii. the four worldly Empires, under the figure of four beasts, are viewed in their religious aspect. In ch. viii. is predicted the struggle between the Persian and Grecian powers, and the rise of the corrupting influence of Antiochus Epiphanes, the “little horn,” which prepared the way for the final overthrow of the Jews by the Romans. Then follow the precise prophecies regarding the Messiah. In seven weeks, forty-nine years, the city would be rebuilt; in sixty-two weeks, 434 years, Christ would begin His ministry, and in the middle of one week, three and a half years, He would be cut off. Ch. x. foretells the opposition of the Persian power to the restoration of the Jews; while ch. xi. more minutely predicts the history of the four Persian kings, that of Alexander and his successors, till the conquest of Syria by Rome, followed by a forecast of the growth of the supremacy of Christ’s kingdom to the end of the world.

THE MINOR PROPHETS.

The twelve following books were anciently collected together, under the title of “The Book of the Twelve Prophets.” These were called the minor or lesser prophets, simply because they were shorter than the four others. They are not placed in the order in which the prophecies were delivered. Nine of them prophesied before the captivity; three, after the Jews returned from Babylon, and some of the former were as early, or earlier than the prophet Isaiah. It may be supposed that these prophets who wrote little, and many others who wrote nothing, were eminent and useful preachers of righteousness to their own generations; and some of them, as Elijah and Elisha, may perhaps have done even more service in their own time, than those who have left more behind them for the benefit of posterity. Such, at least, has been the manner in which the Lord has often dispensed his gifts amongst his servants.

1. HOSEA.

Hosea is supposed to have been a native and inhabitant of the kingdom of Israel. He lived during the turbulent reigns of the last six or seven of its kings; viz: from Jeroboam II. to Hoshea, a period of about sixty years. He was contemporary with Isaiah, Joel, Micah, and Amos; and, like the latter, directed his prophecies chiefly to the kingdom of the ten tribes, addressing them by the names of Israel and Ephraim.

The kingdom of Israel was then rapidly passing from its last short interval of outward prosperity under Jeroboam II., into a state of anarchy and ruin. Four successive kings were assassinated by conspirators; and one military chief after another took possession of the throne.

The idolatry of Jeroboam had produced all kinds of vice; the kings were profligate; the priests had introduced shameful rites throughout the land; God was forgotten; the rulers looked to Assyria or to Egypt for help in their misfortunes, and Hosea compares their defection to the unfaithfulness of a wife to her marriage vows. His illustrations are taken from rural and domestic pursuits (e. g. snaring of birds, sowing, reaping, and threshing, baking of bread). He gives us some insight into the modes of life of that day, e. g. the women decked with earrings and jewels; the feasts and sabbaths are "days of mirth;" they sacrificed on mountain tops, burnt incense on hills, "under oaks, poplars, and elms;" while "troops of robbers wait for a man." This book is quoted by our Lord, by the Evangelist Matthew, and the Apostles Peter and Paul.

It may be divided into two parts: 1. A symbolical representation (i.-iii.) of the adoption of the people, their rebellion, rejection, conversion of the gentiles, and final restoration of Israel. 2. Prophetic discourses, illustrated by most vivid images.

Considering the long period to which the ministry of Hosea extended, it may appear surprising that his writings are comprised within so small a compass; but it must be remembered that, as in the case of others of the prophets, there is no reason to suppose that this book contains all that he ever uttered. Such portions only of his inspired communications are recorded, as the Holy Spirit saw fit to preserve for the benefit of the Jews and of the world.

2. JOEL.

This prophet opens his commission by announcing an extraordinary plague of locusts, accompanied with extreme drought, which he depicts in a strain of animated and sublime poetry under the image of an invading army. It is to be observed that locusts are named by Moses as instruments of Divine justice, Deut. xxviii. 38, 39, and by Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Ki. viii. 37. In the second ch., the formidable aspect of the locusts, their rapid progress; their sweeping devastation; the awful murmur of their countless throngs; their instinctive marshalling; the irresistible perseverance with which they make their way over every obstacle and through every aperture, are delineated with the utmost graphic force.

The prophet after describing the approaching judgments, calls on his countrymen to repent, assuring them of the Divine placability and readiness to forgive, ii. 12-17. He foretells the restoration of the land to its former fertility, and declares that Jehovah would still be their God, ii. 18-26. He then announces the spiritual blessings which would be poured forth in the Messianic age, ii. 28-32. This remarkable prediction is applied by the Apostle Peter to the events that transpired on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 16-21. In the last ch. iii., the Divine vengeance is denounced against the enemies and oppressors of the chosen people, of whom the Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Edomites, are especially named.

3. AMOS.

This prophet is said ch. i. 1 to have begun his ministry "in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." The precise date of this calamity is nowhere mentioned (it was probably about 787 b. c.): but its fearful violence was long remembered by the Hebrews, and is alluded to in the book of Zecharia, ch. xiv. 5. Amos appears to have been contemporary with Hosea, with whom he exactly agrees in his descriptions of the state of affairs in the kingdom of the ten tribes, where idolatry, with its consequent evils — dissoluteness and immorality of every kind — reigned uncontrolled. He appears to have prophesied in Bethel, ch. vii.

10-13, but he did not belong to the kingdom of Israel, being an inhabitant, and probably a native, of Tekoa, a city of Judah, lying four leagues south of Jerusalem, on the borders of the vast open pastures of the hill country of Judea.

Israel was at the height of its prosperity; the poor were oppressed; luxury abounded, and God was forgotten. He preached against the nations around the two kingdoms. He then describes the state of Israel and Judah, and especially charges Ephraim with ingratitude and obduracy. Next follow symbolical visions of successive punishments on Israel, culminating in ruin; but beyond that rises a hope of restored glory in the kingdom of the Messiah, in which the gentiles will participate. In ch. vii. the idolatrous priest complains to Jeroboam, who orders Amos to quit his kingdom. From this incident we have Beth-el depicted to us as a manor residence of the king, with its chief Temple of the Calves, and its hierarchy of royal chaplains vii. 13, and the result of Amos' words of woe, that they had roused the people from one end of the land to the other. His illustrations are from agricultural pursuits: e.g. "a cart full of sheaves," "corn sifted in a sieve," the "latter-growth after the king's mowings," "a cow leaping through a gap."

4. OBADIAH.

The time, when Obadiah delivered his prophecy is uncertain, but it was probably between the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, in the year 578 b. c., and the conquest of Idumea by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place about five years afterwards.

Israel had no greater enemy than the Edomites, who were proud of their worldly wisdom, and imagined themselves quite secure in their dwellings amongst the rocks. Hence they are often spoken of by the prophets, as a type of the earthly powers that oppose God and his kingdom. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, they had proclaimed their malicious joy at the sufferings of their brethren, who carried with them to Babylon the recollection of their insults and cruelty: see Psalm cxxxvii. 7. Such wickedness could not pass unpunished; and Obadiah was commanded to announce to the Edomites their ruin, and to give as the reason for it, not so much their pride and presumpt-

nous confidence in their own strength and wisdom, as their bitter enmity to the people of God.

But the chosen race themselves had just been carried into captivity: the holy land was deserted; and the chastisement denounced against the Edomites might therefore appear not to differ from that, which had already been inflicted upon the seed of Jacob. The prophet, however, goes on to declare that Edom should be as though it had never been, and should be swallowed up for ever; (a prophecy which has been remarkably fulfilled;) while Israel should rise again from her present fall; should re-possess not only her own land, but also Philistia and Edom; and should finally rejoice in the holy reign of the promised Messiah.

5. JONAH.

Jonah was a native of Gath-hepher in Galilee. He is mentioned in 2 Ki. xiv. 25, as having predicted the extension of the kingdom of Israel to its former boundaries; which was accomplished by means of the valor and prudence of Jeroboam II. He is supposed to have lived during that reign; or, possibly, at an earlier period, about the time of Jehoahaz. In either case he is the most ancient of the prophets whose writings we possess.

This book, with the exception of the prayer in ch. ii., is a simple narrative; and relates that Jonah, being sent on a mission to Nineveh, attempts to flee to Tarshish; but, being overtaken by a storm, he is cast into the sea, swallowed by a great fish, and continues in its belly three days (ch. i.), when, earnestly praying to God, he is wonderfully delivered, ch. ii. At the renewed command of God he goes to Nineveh, and announces its destruction; upon which the Ninevites, believing his words, fast, pray, repent, and are graciously spared, ch. iii. Jonah, fearing to be thought a false prophet, peevishly repines at the mercy of God, and wishes for death. Leaving the city, he is sheltered by a gourd, which, however, shortly withers; and Jonah, manifesting great impatience and rebellion, is shown, by his concern about the gourd, the propriety of God's mercy to Nineveh, ch. iv.

The whole narrative presents the most striking contrast between the tender mercy of God, and the rebellion, impatience, and selfishness of his servant: and further, between

the readiness with which the Ninevites repented, at the preaching of a prophet who visited them as a stranger, and the manner in which the Israelites treated the servants of Jehovah, who lived and labored amongst them.

6. MICAH.

Micah was a native of Maresha (or Moresheth), a town of Judah near Gath; and appears to have been commissioned (about 750 B. C.) not long after Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah had begun their ministry, to repeat the reproofs and warnings which they had addressed to both Israel and Judah. He first describes the approaching ruin of both kingdoms; particularizing several of the towns and villages of Judah in his own neighborhood, ch. i. He then rebukes and threatens the princes, prophets, and people, for their prevailing sins; introducing, however, an intimation of mercy, ch. ii. iii. In the second section he proceeds to unfold the future and better destinies of the people; dwelling at length upon the happiness and glory of the Church, under the reign of Christ, in a prophecy which presents a beautiful epitome of the latter parts of Isaiah; and then reverting to the nearer deliverance of the Jews, and the destruction of the Assyrian power, ch. iv. v. The third division exhibits the reasonableness, purity, and justice of the Divine requirements, in contrast with the ingratitude, injustice, and superstition of the people, which caused their ruin. From the contemplation of this catastrophe, the prophet turns for encouragement, to the unchanging truth and mercy of Jehovah, which he sets before the people, as the most powerful inducement to hearty repentance, ch. vi. vii.

Micah has much of the poetic beauty of Isaiah, and of the vigor of Hosea. His style is, however, occasionally obscure, through conciseness and sudden transitions from one subject to another.

7. NAHUM.

The Book of Nahum is a striking illustration of the moral use of prophecy, of its fitness to console (so the name of the prophet implies) the believer, and strengthen him for present duties.

Of Nahum himself, nothing is known, except that he belonged to Elkosh, a place now unrecognized, but which

Jerome (who lived a thousand years afterwards) asserts to have belonged to Galilee.

He probably prophesied in Judah, after the ten tribes had been carried captive, and between the two invasions of Sennacherib. At this period of perplexity, when the overthrow of Samaria must have suggested to Judah many fears for her own safety, when Jerusalem had been drained of its treasure by Hezekiah, in the vain hope of turning away the fury of Sennacherib, and when distant rumors of the conquest of part of Egypt, added still more to the general dismay, the prophet is raised up to reveal the power and tenderness of Jehovah, ch. i. 1-8, to foretell the subversion of the Assyrian empire, i. 9-12, the death of Sennacherib, and the deliverance of Hezekiah, i. 13-15. The destruction of Nineveh is then predicted in the most glowing colors, and with singular minuteness, and profane history tells us that these predictions have been literally fulfilled.

8. HABAKKUK.

Nothing is known with certainty of the parentage and life of Habakkuk: but he is supposed to have prophesied in Judah during the reign of Josiah, some years before the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar.

As Nahum foretold the destruction of the Assyrians, who carried the ten tribes captive, so Habakkuk foretells the judgments that should come on the Chaldeans, who completed the captivity of Judah and Benjamin.

The prophet begins by lamenting the great wickedness of the Jewish people, and announces the sufferings they were about to endure from the terrible Chaldeans, as a punishment for their sins. He humbly expostulates with God for inflicting such judgments upon his people, by a nation more wicked than themselves, ch. i. He receives and communicates the answer of Jehovah to his expostulation; foretelling the future humiliation of the conquerors, who had plundered so many nations; and declaring the judgments which should come upon the Chaldeans for their covetousness, cruelty, and idolatry, ch. ii. To this the prophet replies in a most sublime ode, celebrating the wonderful displays of the power and majesty of God, during the early history of the Hebrews; and expressing his awe of the Divine judgments, and his firm trust in the Divine

mercy under the most afflictive trials, ch. iii. This magnificent Psalm, which appears to have been intended for use in public worship, was evidently designed to afford consolation to the pious Jews under their approaching calamities.

9. ZEPHANIAH.

Of Zephaniah nothing is known but what is said in the first verse. He probably prophesied in the early part of Josiah's reign, or about the time when Jeremiah entered on the prophetic office, when those abuses prevailed in Judah which Josiah reformed. He is poetical, but not characterized by any remarkable beauties. He teaches, like the other prophets, the hateful and ruinous nature of sin, the righteous government of God, and His gracious purposes towards His Church. We find here, as in all other parts of Scripture, what may awake our fears, animate our hopes, and direct our steps.

For fifty years prophecy was silent, during most of which time the wicked reign of Manasseh hurried on the judgments of God. The book commences with a general warning against Judah, and the idolatrous worship of Baal and Moloch, followed by judgments threatening Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and Nineveh, and concluding with special reproofs to Jerusalem, illuminated by the promise of restoration to glory in the latter days. There is much similarity of expression between this book and that of Jeremiah.

10. HAGGAI.

Haggai was the first of the three prophets sent to the Jews, after their return from the captivity, beginning to prophesy eighteen years after that event, in the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes. In the year after their arrival, the Jews had laid the foundations of the temple; but having been interrupted by an interdict which the Samaritans obtained from the king of Persia, Pseudo Smerdis, they lost all courage, became indifferent, and neglected to resume their work, although the death of Pseudo Smerdis gave them the opportunity to do so. The time was not come, they said, to build the house of the Lord; and, meanwhile, they gave themselves to building and adorning their own houses, cultivating their fields and vineyards, and tending their flocks. But God visited his disobedient people with stroke upon stroke, to bring them

back to himself, ch. i. 4-14; ii. 5-19; Zec. viii, 9-12; and raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, to rouse them to the performance of their duty, and to encourage them in it.

This book contains four prophetic messages, which were all delivered in the space of about four months. They are so exceedingly brief, that they are supposed to be only a summary of the original prophecies.

In the first, delivered on the first day of the sixth month, Haggai reproves the Jews for neglecting the temple, and promises that the Divine favor shall attend its erection. Twenty-four days after this prophecy, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and all the people, resumed their work at the house of the Lord, and were encouraged by a gracious message from God, ch. i.

About four weeks afterwards, the zeal of the people appears to have cooled; and many doubts and fears arose in their minds. To remove these, Haggai declares that the Lord of hosts is with them; that his Spirit shall remain with them; and that the glory of the new temple shall be greater than that of Solomon, ch. ii. 1-9.

Two months afterwards, Haggai addresses them a third time; showing them that their conduct could not be well-pleasing to God, so long as they neglected their duty; and promising them the Divine blessing from the time the foundation of the Lord's house was laid, ch. ii. 10-19. And on the same day another prophecy was delivered, addressed to Zerubbabel, the head and representative of the family of David, and the individual with whom the genealogy of the Messiah began after the captivity, promising the preservation of the people of God, amidst the fall and ruin of the kingdoms of the world, ch. ii. 20-23.

11. ZECHARIAH.

Zechariah was, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, of the priestly race; his grandfather Iddo being the chief of one of the classes of priests who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua, Neh. xii. 4; at which time Zechariah must have been very young. He was contemporary with Haggai, with whom he labored in exhorting and encouraging the Jews to rebuild the temple, and restore its public ordinances. But, in addition to this, he was commissioned to deliver many important prophecies relating to the future.

The book of Zechariah has been variously divided into 2, 3, or 4 parts. Perhaps we may most conveniently distribute it into two principal sections, in each of which are some minor divisions. 1. The first comprises i.-viii., in which we have, after an introductory message i. 1-6. A series of visions with which the prophet was favored on the night of the 24th day of the 11th month in the 2d year of Darius Hystaspes, 7-vi. 15, closely connected with the then state of Jerusalem, symbolically describing the four great Gentile empires, and exhibiting with comfortable promises the establishment of a new theocracy, also pointing onward to the future glory of God's people under the great King and Priest, the Messiah, who would purge away iniquity, and rule His chosen. 2. A response of happy prediction delivered in the 4th year of Darius to certain inquirers, showing how times of mourning for past calamities should be turned into seasons of joyful praise, vii, viii. 3. In the second part, ix.-xiv., there are far-reaching prophecies, which leaving present events stretch onward to Messianic times. Included here we have 1. The struggle of worldly powers with God's chosen people, while Messiah's office is foreshadowed, ix.-xi.; 2. The last onset of foes upon Jerusalem, the repentance of the Jewish nation for their rejection and murder of Messiah, with the final glory of that new kingdom of righteousness which shall never pass away, xii.-xiv. The style of Zechariah is for the most part prosaic, though in the later chapters the grandeur of the subject has given an elevation to the language which describes it. Several references to Zechariah occur in the New Testament, e. g. Matt. xxi. 4, 5, xxv. 31; John xii. 15, xix. 37.

12. MALACHI.

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and is supposed to have prophesied about B. C. 420. As the word Malachi means my angel, or my messenger, (i. e. of the Lord), it has been supposed by some to be rather an appellation than a proper name. Nothing is known of his personal history; but it appears that he lived after Zechariah, at a time when the second temple was already built, and the service of the altar, with its offerings and sacrifices, was established; for it is a profane and insincere spirit in that service, especially among the priests, which he labors to correct. It is probably

that he was contemporary with, or immediately followed Nehemiah. He censures the offences which excited the indignation of that governor, and called forth his earnest endeavors for their removal.

It appears from this book that the moral and religious state of the people had greatly declined since the time of Haggai and Zechariah. While at the former period, promises and encouragements had been chiefly addressed to them, in the time of Malachi they had more need of reproofs and warnings. They were the slaves of formalism and self-righteousness; satisfied with themselves; complaining of God; irritated at the afflictions which he sent them; and not hesitating even to accuse him of injustice, and to blaspheme his name.

Malachi reproves the priests for their profane and mercenary conduct; and the people, for their divorces, and intermarriages with idolaters: declaring that God would make his name great among the Gentiles; for he was wearied with the impiety of Israel. He proclaims that the Lord, whom they sought, would suddenly come to his temple, preceded by the harbinger who should prepare his way. He declares the distinction that shall be finally made between the righteous and the wicked; and concludes with an impressive assurance of approaching salvation to those who feared God, upon whom "the Sun of righteousness should arise with healing in his wings;" and with a solemn injunction to the people of God to observe the law of Moses, while they were expecting the coming of the promised Saviour.

The manner of concluding this book seems to imply that they were to expect no more prophets till the forerunner of the Messiah should come; and from this period the spirit of prophecy appears to have ceased among the Jewish people until the time of the New Testament.



THE NEW TESTAMENT.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament is a collection of Divinely inspired writings, containing accounts of our Saviour's life, and of the formation of the earliest Christian churches both from among the Jews and the Gentiles, through the labors of his Apostles; followed by their Epistles, or letters, exhibiting Gospel truth, both doctrinal and practical, in all its fullness; and ending with prophetic visions predicting the future destinies of the Church and the world. The New Testament thus agrees in its plan and arrangement with the Old: the records of God's works standing first, as being the basis of Holy Writ; so that all revelations of religious truth rest upon the foundation of historical *facts*.

It was evidently necessary, in order to secure to future ages the benefits of Divine revelation, that the oral instructions of the apostles should be preserved in a permanent form, and in authentic documents. The Holy *Word* must become the Holy *Scripture*. Therefore the same Divine Spirit, who had been promised to them to lead them into all truth, and to bring all things whatsoever their Master had said, to their remembrance, qualified them also to commit to writing, in sure and infallible records, the facts and principles of the religion of Jesus.

These books, which are twenty-seven in number, are the productions of eight different authors, all of whom were contemporary with our Saviour. They were written at various times, and at different places; and when the latest of them was given to the world, the Gospel had been preached, and churches founded, in many parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

I. HISTORICAL BOOKS.

I. THE GOSPELS.

The word *Gospel*, which is formed of two Saxon words, *God* or *good*, and *spel*, *word*, is a translation of a Greek word, which means *good news*, or *glad tidings*, Luke ii. 10; and which, from

signifying the message itself, came to mean the book in which it is recorded.

The four Gospels were written at different periods, under the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit, by the four persons whose names they bear. Each of them contains a history of our Saviour's life and ministry, marked by its own peculiarities, and yet possessing remarkable general agreement with the rest. On reading them attentively, it is at once seen that the four evangelists bear testimony to the same great facts of our Saviour's life, death, and resurrection; and they all agree in describing his Divine nature, dignity and power, combined with his complete humanity, and his perfectly "holy, sinless, and undefiled" character as man. Yet, while the evangelists have so many characteristics in common, and it is easy to prove that they have been all led and directed by the same Holy Spirit (2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Peter i. 21), it is equally clear that each of them wrote with a particular object, and addressed himself to a certain class of readers.

The *first* Gospel was intended for Hebrew Christians, and the Jewish nation generally; its leading purpose being to show that Jesus was the promised Messiah — the expected King of the Jews — the Son of David; and that in him the prophecies of the Old Testament found their fulfillment. The *second* contains the principal events of the first, with additional details, presented in a form which would render them intelligible to Gentiles. The *third* is also specially designed for converted heathen; and exhibits Jesus not merely as the Messiah of the Jews, but as the Saviour-God of the world. The *fourth*, written in the midst of the Asiatic Greeks, exhibits the Gospel in a form most calculated to arrest their attention, and to counteract the errors of the systems of philosophy prevailing amongst them; while another of its chief objects doubtless was, by proving at greater length our Lord's Divinity, to confute certain errors which were beginning to arise.

In studying the Gospels it is important to remember the peculiar character of our Lord's teaching, which differs in some respects from that of his apostles. Some things were not clearly made known by our Lord, even to his disciples, till towards the close of his ministry. There were doctrines which their minds were too weak and unprepared to receive,—which it required his death, resurrection, and ascension to illustrate,

—and which they could not fully understand until the “Spirit of truth” had come to “guide them into all truth.” Our Lord came from heaven, not so much to make the Gospel revelation, as to be the subject of it, by doing and suffering all things necessary to procure the salvation of mankind, appointing his Spirit after his ascension to be his chief interpreter. And thus we are to look to the preaching of the apostles as described in the book of Acts, and to their Epistles, for a full view of the Christian dispensation.

1. MATTHEW.

Matthew (who is supposed to be the same as Levi, comp. Matt. ix. 9-13 with Luke v. 27-32) was employed as a publican, or collector of customs under the Romans, at Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, when the Lord called him to be a witness of his words and works. Whether his heart had been already prepared by any previous knowledge of the Saviour, or whether this call was his first acquaintance with him whom he recognized as the Messiah, we are not informed: but he immediately abandoned his worldly employments and gains, to follow Jesus.

Matthew was probably the first who wrote for future ages an account of the Saviour’s life. He had actually seen the greatest part of the things, which he relates; he attended upon Christ as he went from one place to another, was present upon the spot when he wrought his miracles, heard his discourses, sat down with him at his last supper, and saw him after his resurrection from the dead.

It is impossible to fix exactly the time when this book was written, which is placed by some as early as A. D. 37; by others as late as A. D. 63. The weight of evidence, however, seems to be in favor of the earlier date. It was probably written during the troubles which preceded the Jewish wars; certainly before the destruction of Jerusalem.

There has been much difference of opinion upon the question whether Matthew wrote this book in Greek or in Hebrew. Some suppose that he wrote it in both. It is certain, however, that, if it were originally written in Hebrew, the Greek version of it was made at a very early period, and was more used than the Hebrew.

He gives the human descent of our Lord from Abraham, as

evidence of His being the promised Seed, in whom all nations should be blessed. Thus He completes the Old Testament history and covenant. He is the one Antitype in whom all has been fulfilled; in Him the Old Testament passes into the New; the prohibitions of the law into the encouragements of the Gospel; Sinai into the Mount of Beatitudes; the prophetic into the teaching office; priesthood into redemption by suffering; kingship into the supremacy of Almighty grace restoring a fallen race.

The true character of the Messiah is attested:

1. By His lineal descent, and Divine revelation at His birth, i.-iv.
2. By the manifestation of His triple office (Prophet, Priest, and King), in conflict with the popular ideas, v.-xvi.
3. By unfolding the true nature of His kingdom and its future history, in contrast with that of the ancient world, xvi.-xx.
4. By His self-sacrifice and humiliation, xxi.-xxiv.
5. By prophetic revelations of the judgment on the Jewish nation and on the world, xxiv., xxv.
6. By His sacerdotal presentation of himself as the atoning sacrifice, xxvi., xxvii.
7. By His glorification at the right hand of power, xxviii.

This Gospel is peculiarly characterized by repeated reference to the Law and Prophets, i. 23; ii. 6, 15, 18; iii. 3; iv. 15; viii. 17, 18; by careful enunciation of such teaching as would awaken Jews, and correct their false views; and the warnings of national calamities.

2. MARK.

Mark, who, besides his Latin name of Marcus, appears to have had the Hebrew name of John, was the son of Mary, a pious woman at Jerusalem, who received in her house the assemblies of the primitive Church, and welcomed the apostle Peter after his deliverance out of prison by the angel, Acts xii. 12. Mark was the nephew of Barnabas, Paul's companion in his travels, Col. iv. 10. These two, being at Jerusalem about the time of Peter's deliverance, took Mark with them upon their mission, Acts xii. 25. He accompanied them to Antioch; and thence, on their first journey to Asia Minor, as far as Perga in Pamphylia; where he left them, and returned to Jerusalem,

Acts xiii. 5, 13. We afterwards find him at Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, desiring to accompany them on a second journey: but Paul, regarding him as unfit for the work, since he had left them on the former occasion, was unwilling to take him; which caused a warm dispute and a temporary separation between the two apostles, Acts xv. 37-39; and Barnabas, influenced probably by his affection for his kinsman, "took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus." There can be no doubt that Mark afterwards acknowledged his error; for the apostle Paul appears to have given him his confidence and affection. See Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11, Philem. 24.

He was attached to Peter 1 Pet. v. 13, from whom he got some materials for his Gospel; but it is evident he had also before him both the Hebrew and the Greek copies of Matthew, since he clearly compared the differences in diction between the two, weighed their relative value, made his selection, and supplied occasional new graphic touches to the narrative from some independent witness: e. g. Christ is among "wild beasts;" the fig-tree dried up "from the roots;" Jesus is asleep "on a pillow" i. 13; xi. 20; iv. 38. His theme is "Judah is a young lion" Gen. xlxi. 9; Hos. xi. 10; and he depicts the Saviour as the conqueror of all Satanic powers, with a brevity and vividness which add force to the heroic character portrayed. Hence he gives only three burning words of controversy and denunciation, not the longer discourses of the Lord; event succeeds event in rapid succession; he accumulates negatives; his favorite word is "immediately;" his tenses are present; and he supplies often the very vernacular words used in the occurrences iii. 17, 22; v. 41. The Messiah seems to rouse every emotion of the soul — amazement, fear, confidence, hope, joy,—and adapts His Divine power to temper each.

The Gospel of Mark is a simple and compendious narrative; and the style is clear and correct. Having been written for the use of Christians of Gentile origin, there are neither quotations from the ancient prophets, nor allusions to Jewish customs; and such explanations are added as might be necessary for readers unacquainted with Palestine. Thus, when Jordan is first mentioned, the word "river" is prefixed. The oriental word "Corban" is said to mean "a gift." The "preparation" is said to be the day before the sabbath; "defiled hands" are said to mean "unwashed hands;" and

the superstitious notions of the Jews upon that subject are explained.

3. LUKE.

Luke, the writer of the Gospel which bears his name, is generally allowed to have been the "beloved physician" mentioned by Paul, Col. iv. 14. According to the testimony of some of the Fathers, he was a native of Antioch. He would appear, from his intimate acquaintance with the Greek language, as well as from his Greek name, *Loucas*, to have been of Gentile extraction. But, from the Hebrew terms occurring in his writings, and from his accurate knowledge of the Jewish religion, ceremonies, and customs, it is highly probable that he was in early life a Jewish proselyte: and, having afterwards embraced the Gospel, he became a faithful and zealous companion of Paul in many of his labors and travels, Acts xvi. 10; xx. 5, &c. We learn from Acts xxvii. 28, and Philem. 24, that he was with the apostle at the time of his first captivity at Rome, and from 2 Tim. iv. 11, that, during his second imprisonment, Luke alone remained by his side.

With regard to the questions when and where this Gospel was written, there is no certain information. Some suppose that it was written during the time that Luke was in Paul's company, probably during his confinement at Roine, about the year 63 or 64. Others are of opinion that it was at a later period, when Luke had left Paul and gone into Greece. But, however, that may be, is it evident that it was originally written for Gentile readers, as that of Matthew was originally designed for Jews. Not only is it dedicated to a Gentile convert, but explanations are given with reference to facts and places, which would have been unnecessary for inhabitants of Palestine, but which were required for the information of those who were remote from the scene of action, and ignorant of Jewish affairs.

The Gospel of Luke is generally considered to be more in the nature of a regular biography than either of the others. He appears to have preserved accurately the chronological order of his main facts, closing the various periods of its history with a number of incidental circumstances and discourses, which belong to that division of time, but the exact sequence of which he is not careful to specify.

The numerous and important additional facts which Luke

has supplied, give to his Gospel a peculiar value. He relates with remarkable clearness the conversations of Jesus, with the incidents that gave rise to them, the remarks of those, who were present, and their results. Though containing information supplementary to that given by Matthew, his Gospel has not the character of a supplemental document; but is evidently an independent and original work. He introduces few parables but such as Matthew had not given; which seems to indicate that he was well acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, and had no thought of superseding it.

4. JOHN.

John, the brother of James, who with him was called to the apostleship, was the son of Zebedee and of Salome. His father was a fisherman living at Bethsaida in Galilee, on the borders of the lake of Gennesareth. The family appear to have been in easy circumstances; at least we find that Zebedee employed hired servants, Mk. i. 20; and that Salome was among the women who contributed to the maintenance of Jesus, Matt. xxvii. 56.

Having been brought up in the knowledge and the love of the true God by a pious mother, he appears to have early become a disciple of our Lord's forerunner; and to have been directed by him to Jesus, whom he followed: it being generally considered that he was one of the two disciples mentioned in ch. i. 37-41. He was soon admitted, with his brother James, and Peter, to particular intimacy with the Saviour, who selected them as witnesses of the most important and solemn events of his life, Mk. v. 37; Matt. xviii. 1; xxvi. 37.

John is said to have remained at Jerusalem till the death of Mary, about the year A. D. 48. After Paul had left Asia Minor, John went to labor there, residing chiefly at Ephesus, and founding several churches in that country. Shortly afterwards, during the persecution under Domitian, (or, according to others, towards the end of the reign of Nero), he was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea; where he received the visions of the Apocalypse. On the accession of Nerva he was liberated, and returned to Ephesus; where he continued to labor during the rest of his life. He died in the hundredth year of his age, about A. D. 100.

According to the general testimony of ancient writers, John

wrote his Gospel at Ephesus about the year 97, long after the destruction of Jerusalem: which accounts for his making no mention of our Lord's predictions of that event and the dispersion of the Jews; those prophecies having at that time received their accomplishment. John alone, also, relates the resurrection of Lazarus: a miracle so stupendous and notorious, that it appears wonderful that the other evangelists should have passed it over in silence. But the Jews had consulted to put Lazarus to death, ch. xii. 9-11. While Lazarus lived, the memory of the miracle could not be lost in Judea; and in other countries it might be published by word of mouth: but, as the public recording of it by the evangelists, while the Jewish priests and rulers possessed authority, might needlessly have exasperated them, and exposed Lazarus and his sisters to imminent danger, silence was observed respecting it in the Gospels, till Jerusalem was destroyed and Lazarus deceased; and then the whole was circumstantially related.

As many Gentiles had then embraced Christianity, and John was writing chiefly for them, he gives explanations of Jewish terms and customs whenever he has occasion to mention them: calling the feasts, (which he is careful to note), feasts of the Jews: explaining the "sea of Galilee" as being the same as the "sea of Tiberias;" telling his readers that "Rabbi" signifies teacher, and "Messiah" Christ; and accounting for the conduct of the Samaritans by recalling the fact, unknown to other nations, that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Explanations of this kind are observable in the two preceding Gospels; but in this they are more marked, and occur more frequently.

It is generally considered that John had the other three Gospels before him when he wrote; inasmuch as he omits all that had been described in them with sufficient minuteness. He supposes the great events of our Saviour's life and his principal instructions, to be already known to his readers. If at any time he relates what had been mentioned by the other evangelists, it is generally with a view to introduce some important discourse of our Lord; or because it was particularly connected with the main object of his Gospel. This Gospel has consequently less of historical narrative, and more of the doctrine, than any other; for which reason it was called by Clement the *spiritual Gospel*.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

B.C.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.						
	<i>Preface.</i>	.....	.....	.....	.....	i. 1-5
5	Annunciation of the birth of St. John.	Jerusalem.	.....	.....	.....	i. 1-4
	St. Mary's espousal.	Nazareth.	i. 18	.....	.....	i. 5-25
	The Annunciation of the birth of Jesus.	“	.....	.....	.....	i. 27
	The visitation of St. Mary to Elizabeth.	Hebron, or Juttah.	.....	.....	.....	i. 26-38
	Her return to Nazareth.	.....	.....	.....	.....	i. 39-55
	Joseph's visitation and vision.	.....	.....	.....	.....	i. 56
	Birth and infancy of St. John the Baptist.	Nazareth.	i. 20-25	.....	.....	.....
	Birth and infancy of Jesus.	Hebron	.....	.....	.....	i. 57-80
	Apparition to and adoration by shepherds	Bethlehem.	.....	.....	.....	ii. 1-7
	Circumcision.	“	i. 25	.....	.....	ii. 8-16
	Presentation and purification.	Jerusalem.	.....	.....	.....	ii. 22
	<i>Genealogies.</i>	.....	i. 17	.....	.....	ii. 22-29
3	Adoration of the wise men.	Bethlehem.	i. 1-12	.....	.....	iii. 23
	A.D. Flight into Egypt.	Egypt.	ii. 13-15	.....	.....	.....
	Massacre of the Innocents.	Bethlehem.	ii. 16-18	.....	.....	.....
1	Return to Nazareth.	Nazareth.	ii. 19-23	.....	.....	ii. 39
	Childhood of Jesus.	“	.....	.....	.....	ii. 40
	Catechizing in the temple.	Jerusalem.	.....	.....	.....	ii. 46-50
7-26	Youth of Jesus.	Nazareth	.....	.....	.....	ii. 51
MISSION OF THE BAPTIST.						
26	Ministry of St. John the Baptist.	Bethabara	iii. 1-4	i. 1-8	iii. 1-6	i. 6-15
	Baptism by “	“	iii. 5	i. 5	iii. 7	.....
	Witness to Christ by “	“	“	iii. 11, 12	i. 7, 8	iii. 15-18
	Baptism of Jesus.	“	iii. 18-21	i. 9-11	iii. 21-23	.....
	Temptation of Jesus.	Wilderness of Judea	iv. 1-11	i. 12, 13	iv. 1-13.	.....
	St. John's second testimony.	Bethabara	“	.....	.....	i. 19-35
	Call of first disciples (five).	“	.....	.....	.....	i. 37-51

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
27	Christ's First Appearance.					
	First miracle at Cana.....	Cana.....	.....	.....	.....	ii. 1-11
	Visit to Capernaum.....	Capernaum .....	.....	.....	.....	ii. 12
	First Passover; first cleansing of temple.....	Jerusalem .....	.....	.....	.....	ii. 13-23
	Discourse with Nicodemus.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	iii. 1-21
	The Baptist's last testimony.....	Ænon .....	.....	.....	.....	iii. 25-36
	Christ's visit to Samaria.....	Sychar .....	.....	.....	.....	iv. 1-42
	" return to Cana.....	Cana .....	.....	.....	.....	iv. 43-46
	" healing of nobleman's son.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	iv. 46-54
	FIRST PUBLIC PREACHING.					
	Imprisonment of St. John the Baptist.....	Macherus	iv. 12	i. 14	.....
	Christ's preaching in Galilee:					
	" " at Nazareth.....	Nazareth .....	.....	vi. 1	iv. 15-30	
	" " at Capernaum.....	Capernaum	iv. 13.	.....	iv. 31	
	Call of Sts. Andrew, Peter, James and John.....	"	iv. 18-22	vi. 16	.....
	Miracles:—Casting out a devil.....	" .....	.....	vi. 23	iv. 33	
	" Healing St. Peter's mother-in-law.....	" .....	.....	vi. 29	iv. 38	
	" Healing many sick and diseased.....	" .....	.....	vi. 32	iv. 40	
	FIRST GENERAL CIRCUIT.					
	Preparatory <i>prayer</i>					
	Circuit through Galilee.....	.....	iv. 23-25	.....	iv. 42	
	Sermon on Mount.....	Hill above Gennesaret .....	.....	i. 39	iv. 44	
	Sermon in the boat; miraculous draught of fish.....	Gennesaret .....	.....	.....	.....
	Healing of a leper.....	vii. 2-4	.....	v. 1	.....
	Retirement for <i>prayer</i>.....	.....	.....	i. 40	.....
	Healing of palsied man.....	Capernaum	ix. 2	.....	.....
	Call of St. Matthew (Levi), supper and discourse.....	Capernaum .....	.....	ii. 1	v. 16	
			.....	ii. 13-18	v. 17	
			.....	.....	v. 27-33	

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
SECOND YEAR'S MINISTRY.						
28	Second Passover.....	Jerusalem .....	.....	.....	.....	v. 1 v. 2-47.
28	Miracle at Bethesda and discourse on it.....	Galilee	xii. 1	il. 23	vi. 1	.....
	The Sabbath; plucking corn.....	.....	.....	.....	vi. 6	.....
	The miracle of the withered hand.....	Caperناum	xii. 10	iii. 1	vi. 11	.....
	Opposition of Herodians.....	“	xii. 14	iii. 6	vi. 12	.....
	<i>Retirement for prayer.</i>	“	“	iii. 13	vi. 13	.....
	Ordination of Twelve Apostles.....	“	“	iii. 14	vi. 17-49	.....
	Sermon on the Plain (of Gennesaret).....	near Nain	x. 2-4	“	vi. 1	.....
	Healing centurion's servant.....	“	“	“	vii. 1	.....
	“ son of widow of Nain.....	Nain	“	“	vii. 11	.....
	Message from St. John the Baptist; Christ's testimony.....	Caperناum	xi. 2-7	“	vii. 17-24	.....
	Warning to Chorazin, etc.....	Lake	xi. 20-28	“	vii. 36	.....
	The Magdalene	Caperناum (?) .....	“	“	“	.....
SECOND GENERAL CIRCUIT.						
28	Through Galilee.....	Galilee	“	“	viii. 1-3	.....
	Healing of a demoniac.....	Caperناum	xii. 22	“	“	.....
	Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.....	“	xii. 24	“	“	.....
	The unclean spirit.....	“	xii. 43	“	“	.....
	The interruption of his relatives stayed by his mother.....	“	xii. 46	“	“	.....
	Parables:—The Sower.....	Plain of GENNESARET	xiii. 1-9	xviii. 1-14	viii. 4, 11-15	.....
	“ Tares.....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Mustard seed.....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Leaven.....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Candle.....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Treasure .....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Pearl.....	“	“	“	“	.....
	“ Net .....	“	“	“	“	.....
	Christ calms the storm.....	Sea of Gennesaret	viii. 24	iv. 87	viii. 23	.....
	“ suffers devils to enter the swine.....	Gadara	viii. 28	v. 1	viii. 27	.....

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
28	Healing of blind man, and discourses Christ the Door.....	Jerusalem .....	.....	.....	.....	ix. 1
	" Good Shepherd.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 1
	FEAST OF DEDICATION.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 11
	Christ's oneness with the Father.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 22
	" retreat across the Jordan.....	Perea .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 30
	" raising of Lazarus.....	Bethany .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 40
	" retreat to Ephraim.....	Ephraim .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 1
	* repulse by the Samaritans.....	Samaria .....	.....	.....	.....	xi. 64
	*Mission of the seventy.....	Galilee .....	.....	.....	.....	ix. 53
	*Parable of the Good Samaritan.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	x. 1-17
	*Visit to Martha and Mary.....	Bethany .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 30
	*The Lord's Prayer.....	Mount of Olives .....	.....	.....	.....	x. 38
	Parable of the importunity of a friend.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xi. 1
	The dumb spirit.....	Jerusalem .....	.....	.....	.....	xi. 5
	The rich fool.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xi. 14
	God's providence to birds and flowers.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xii. 16
	The barren fig tree.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xiii. 6
	The woman with an infirmity .....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xiii. 11
	*The mustard seed.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	xiii. 18
	*Healing the man with dropsy.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	xiv. 1-4
	*Lesson on humility.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	xiv. 7
	Parables:—The great supper.....	Jerusalem .....	.....	.....	.....	xiv. 12
	Parables:—The lost sheep and piece of silver.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xv. 1
	" The prodigal son.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xv. 11
	" unjust steward.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xvi. 1
	" Dives and Lazarus.....	" .....	.....	.....	.....	xvi. 19
	*The ten lepers.....	Samaria .....	.....	.....	.....	xvii. 11

* As an interval of nearly three months occurred between the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication, some place the events marked * in that interval, and vary their order, putting the "healing of the ten lepers" immediately after the "repulse by the Samaritans."

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MAT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
29	<i>Wednesday.</i>					
	Warning of the betrayal.....	Bethany.....	xxvi. 1	xiv. 1	xxii. 1	
	The counsel of the Sanhedrin.....	Jerusalem.....	xxvi. 3	xiv. 10	xxii. 3	
	Judas' betrayal.....	".....	xxvi. 14			
	<i>Thursday.</i>					
	Preparation of the Passover.....	Jerusalem.....	xxvi. 17	xiv. 12	xxii. 7	xiii. 1-17
	Washing the apostles' feet.....	".....	xxvi. 26	xiv. 22	xxii. 19	
	The breaking of bread.....	".....	xxvi. 22	xiv. 19	xxii. 21	xiii. 18
	"One of you shall betray me".....	".....	xxvi. 22-25	xiv. 19		
	"Is it I?".....	".....				
	The giving of the sop. "That thou doest, do quickly".....	".....				xiii. 26-27
	Departure of Judas.....	".....				xiii. 30
	St. Peter warned.....	".....				xiii. 36
	The blessing the cup.....	".....				
	The discourses after supper.....	".....				xiv.-xvi.
	Christ's prayer for his apostles.....	".....				xvii.
	The hymn.....	".....				
	The agony.....	".....				
	His prayer (repeated thrice).....	".....				
	His sweat and the angel's comfort.....	".....				
	The sleep of the apostles.....	".....				
	Betrayal by Judas.....	".....				
	St. Peter smites Malchus.....	".....				
	Christ heals the ear of Malchus.....	".....				
	" forsaken by his disciples.....	".....				
	" led to Annas.....	".....				
	" tried by Caiaphas.....	".....				
	St. Peter follows him.....	".....				
	The high priest's adjuration.....	".....				
	Christ condemned, buffeted, mocked.....	".....				
	St. Peter's denial.....	".....				xviii. 17-27

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
29	<i>Friday.</i>					
	Christ before Pilate.....	Jérusalem.....	xxvii. 1 xxvii. 3	xv. 1	xxiii. 1	xviii. 28
	Repentance of Judas.....	"	"	"	"	xviii. 28
	Pilate comes out to the people.....	"	"	"	"	xviii. 33
	" speaks to Jesus privately.....	"	"	"	"	xix. 1
	" orders him to be scourged.....	"	"	xv. 15	"	xix. 2
	Jesus crowned with thorns.....	xxvii. 26	xv. 15	"	"	xix. 2
	" exhibited by Pilate: "Ecce Homo!".....	xxvii. 28	xv. 17	"	"	xix. 2
	" accused formally.....	"	"	"	"	xix. 2
	" sent by Pilate to Herod, mocked.....	"	"	"	"	xix. 2
	arrayed in purple.....	xxvii. 11	xv. 2	"	"	xix. 2
	" Behold your king!".....	"	"	"	"	xix. 2
	Pilate desires to release him.....	xxvii. 15	xv. 6	"	"	xix. 14
	" receives a message from his wife.....	xxvii. 19	"	"	"	xix. 17
	" washes his hands.....	xxvii. 19	"	"	"	xix. 17
	" releases Barabbas.....	xxvii. 24	"	"	"	xix. 16
	" delivers Jesus to be crucified.....	xxvii. 26	xv. 15	"	"	xix. 16
	Simon of Cyrene carries the cross.....	xxvii. 32	xv. 21	xxiii. 25	xxiii. 25	xix. 16
	They give him vinegar and gall.....	xxvii. 34	xv. 23	xxiii. 26	xxiii. 26	xix. 16
	Nail him to the cross.....	xxvii. 35	xv. 23	xxiii. 36	xxiii. 36	xix. 18
	The superscription.....	xxvii. 37	xv. 26	xxiii. 33	xxiii. 33	xix. 18
				xxiii. 38	xxiii. 38	xix. 19
	THE SEVEN WORDS.					
	1. <i>Father, forgive them.</i>	"	"	"	"	xxiii. 34
	His garments parted and vesture allotted	xxvii. 35	xv. 24	"	"	xxiii. 34
	Passers-by rail, the two thieves revile.....	xxvii. 36-44	xv. 29-32	xxiii. 35	xxiii. 35	xix. 23
	The penitent thief.....	"	"	xxiii. 40	xxiii. 40	xix. 23
	2. <i>To-day shall thou be with me in paradise.</i>	"	"	xxiii. 43	xxiii. 43	xix. 26, 27
	3. <i>Woman, behold thy son.</i>	"	"	"	"	xix. 26, 27
	The darkness.....	xxvii. 45	xv. 33	xxiii. 44	xxiii. 44	xix. 26, 27
	4. <i>My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?</i>	xxvii. 46	xv. 34	"	"	xix. 28
	5. <i>I thirst.</i>	xxvii. 48	xv. 36	"	"	xix. 29
	The vinegar.....	"	"	"	"	xix. 29

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
23	6. <i>It is finished.</i> 7. <i>Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.</i> Bending of the veil.....	Jerusalem.....	xxvii. 51.....	xxv. 38.....	xxiii. 46.....	xix. 30
	Opening of graves and resurrection of saints.....	.....	xxvii. 52.....	.....	xxiii. 45.....	
	Testimony of centurion.....	.....	xxvii. 54.....	xxv. 39.....	xxiii. 47.....	
	Watching of the women.....	.....	xxvii. 55.....	xxv. 40.....	xxiii. 49.....	
	Piercing his side.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	xix. 31
	Taken down from the cross, and buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.....	.....	xxvii. 57-60.....	xxv. 46.....	xxiii. 53.....	xix. 38
	A guard placed at the door, which was sealed.....	.....	xxvii. 65, 66.....	.....	.....	xix. 39-42
	THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.					
	<i>Easter Day.</i>					
	Women carry spices to the tomb.....	.....	xxviii. 1.....	xvi. 2.....	.....
	An angel had rolled away the stone.....	.....	xxviii. 2.....	.....	xxiv. 12.....	xx. 1
	Women announce the resurrection.....	.....	xxviii. 8.....	.....	xxiv. 13.....	xx. 3
	Sts. Peter and John run to the tomb.....	.....	.....	.....	xxiv. 1	
	The women return to the tomb.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	The guards report it to the chief priests.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	APPEARANCE OF CHRIST AFTER THE RESURRECTION.					
	1. To St. Mary Magdalene.....	The garden.....	xxviii. 9.....	xvi. 9, 10.....	.....	xx. 14
	“ <i>All hail! Fear not. Touch me not,</i>”.....	.....	xxviii. 9.....	.....	.....	xx. 17
	2. To the women returning home.....	.....	xxviii. 9.....	.....	.....
	“ <i>Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see me,</i>”.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	3. To two disciples going to Emmaus.....	Emmaus.....	.....	xvi. 12.....	xxiv. 13.....	
	(<i>Exposition of prophecies on the passion</i>)					
	4. To St. Peter.....	Jerusalem.....	“	.....	.....	xxiv. 34
	5. To the apostles in the upper room.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	xxiv. 36
	“ <i>Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you;</i> ” etc. “ <i>Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Whose sever- sins ye remit,</i> ” etc.					

A. D.	EVENTS.	LOCALITY.	ST. MATT.	ST. MARK.	ST. LUKE.	ST. JOHN.
29	<i>First Sunday after Easter.</i>					
6.	To the eleven apostles in the upper room "Peace be unto you," To St. Thomas "Reach hither thy finger," etc. "Blessed are they that have seen, and yet have believed,"	Jerusalem.....	.....	xvi. 14	.....	xx. 26
7.	Second Sunday after Easter. To seven apostles at the Sea of Tiberias. To St. Peter. "Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs."	Tiberias.....	.....	.....	.....	xxi. 1-24
8.	To eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee..... "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc.	(1 Cor. xv. 5) Galilee.....	.....	xxviii. 16	.....
9.	"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."					
10.	To five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. xv. 6)					
11.	To St. James (1 Cor. xv. 7)					
12.	Ascension..... (1 Cor. xv. 7)	Bethany..... (1 Cor. xv. 8)	xvi. 19	.....	xxiv. 50, 51	
	To St. Paul..... (1 Cor. xv. 8)	Damascus (?)	.....		

5. ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

This book is the connecting link between the Gospels and the Epistles, and throws much light on the latter. One very clear and satisfactory evidence, among others, of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament is to be found in the evidently undesigned coincidences between the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles.

The numerous discourses recorded here are for the most part to be regarded rather as containing the substance of what was spoken, than as full reports of what the speakers uttered. They are eminently characteristic of the persons by whom they were delivered, and admirably adapted to the occasion on which they were spoken, showing great consideration of the circumstances, characters, and even the prejudices of those to whom they were addressed.

Analysis. — 1. *The Acts of Peter:* Birth of the Christian Church, and extension to Samaria, comprising 1. Foundation and Progress of the Church in Jerusalem and Judea i.-viii; 2. First Persecution and Extension to Samaria and to the Gentile Family of Cornelius viii.-xi. 18; 3. Second Persecution and Foundation of the Church at Antioch xi, 19-xii. 3.

2. *The Acts of Paul:* Extension of the Church to the Gentiles. 1. Paul's Call and First Apostolic Journey xiii. 4-xv. 5; 2. Council of Jerusalem, Fixing Terms of Admission xv; 3. Second Apostolic Journey xv. 36-xviii. 22; 4. Third Apostolic Journey xviii. 23-xxi. 17; 5. Paul's Imprisonment at Cæsarea and Voyage to Rome xxi. 18-xxviii.

So the progress is recorded from a small Jewish sect to the universal Church. In this book all the articles of the Apostles' Creed may be found, chiefly in Peter's speeches i-v.

NOTE. *The Destruction of Jerusalem.* The downfall of the Jewish nation did not long tarry. The violence of the priests fostered turbulence among the people; which showed itself in persecution of the Christians, and impatience of the Roman yoke. The unbelief which rejected the true Messiah led to the credulous reception of numerous impostors, who raised commotions by exciting hopes of independence. The land was also overrun by robbers. Whilst these things made some Roman governors necessarily severe, they gave others a pretext for injustice and tyranny: until at length, A. D. 66, the extreme oppressions and cruelties of Gessius Florus kindled into a general blaze the fire which had been long smouldering;

and the Jews, rising in open rebellion, took from the Romans several fortified places, among which was Jerusalem. Cestius Gallus, the prefect of Syria, marched into Judea, and besieged the city ; but, just as the Jews were on the point of submitting, he suddenly raised the siege and retreated with great loss. The more peaceable inhabitants, anticipating the return of the exasperated Romans, fled from Jerusalem. Among them were many Christians, who, remembering the injunction of their Master, Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, departed before the avenging army under Titus arrived ; and found at Pella, in the mountains of Gilead, an asylum from the final horrors of the war. Thus, through our Lord's care for his Church, it does not appear that a single Christian perished in the subsequent calamities.

Upon hearing of this revolt, the emperor Nero sent Vespasian with a large army into Syria. The progress of that general was, however, arrested at Jotapata by the valor of the celebrated Josephus, who had been appointed by the Jews to the command for Galilee ; and who, being made prisoner when at last the fortress was taken, became the historian of his nation and of its awful overthrow. Other cities fell before the Roman army ; and the Jews were everywhere treated with extreme severity. Before he reached the capital, Vespasian was recalled to Rome by the stormy events which preceded his elevation to the empire ; and committed the conduct of the war to his son Titus, who began the siege of Jerusalem, A. D. 70. The city was rendered almost impregnable by its situation and vast fortifications ; the temple itself being now made a fortress. The multitudes who had assembled at the passover raised the number within the walls to above two millions ; so that their provisions were soon exhausted, and the most dreadful famine ensued which history has ever recorded.

No general description can give a just idea of the horrors of the siege. The Jews had no regular government ; and were divided into factions, the most ferocious and powerful of which was composed chiefly of banditti. Stimulated both by fear and by fanaticism, they determined not to lay down their arms till they had freed themselves from the Roman yoke. Meanwhile, they exercised the greatest tyranny within the city. They slew the priests at the altar ; murdered thousands of their countrymen ; and plundered and destroyed both public and private provisions. They rejected all offers of peace ; and made a most obstinate resistance. Nor was it till after many assaults that the Romans obtained possession, first of the suburbs, and then of the lower parts of the city. A trench having been dug round the whole city, all supplies were cut off ; and six hundred thousand perished within the walls. At length the fort of Antonia was taken ; and the Jews retreated to the temple. Titus gave express orders to save this magnificent edifice : but it was set on fire by a soldier, and, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the general to extinguish the flames, the whole building was consumed. Six thousand Jews perished in the ruins, and all who remained were put to the sword. The city was then razed to the ground ; and has ever since been trodden down by the Gentiles ; and will so remain "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," Luke xxi. 24.

In this war, more than a million and a half of the Jewish nation perished ;

and many thousands were offered for sale as slaves, till no man would buy them.

Thus the awful predictions of the ancient prophets, some of which had been uttered 1500 years before, and the more recent declarations of our Lord, were completely fulfilled. See Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxviii.; Matt. xiii.; Mark xiii.; Luke xx. 9-18; xxi.; xxiii. 27-31, &c.

This catastrophe, which echoed through the Roman empire, must have been deeply felt by the Christians, both by the Jewish and the heathen converts, in all parts of the world. Yet they could not fail to perceive that this awful day of retribution was one of signal deliverance for them. Experience had taught them that Judaism in its then corrupt state, wherever its influence extended, was the irreconcilable enemy of Christianity. But the overthrow of the Jewish State laid in the dust their bitterest persecutor, and removed one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the Gospel.

This subversion of the Jewish system was also essential to eradicate the undue attachment of the Hebrew Christians to the abolished rites and ceremonies of the old economy. The apostle Paul had in his Epistle set before them in the clearest manner the superior glory and the permanence of the Christian dispensation; and now God by his providence solemnly set his seal to the truths there laid down, by making impossible the performance of those rites which were no longer acceptable to God or beneficial to man. At the same time to the Jew in every part of the world, who was still looking for another Messiah, these events, which so decisively confirmed the Divine mission of Jesus, offered the most powerful motives to receive his religion.

It was, further, only by these means that the Christian church could acquire a distinct and independent existence. Its first preachers had gained access to the people chiefly through the synagogues; and the primitive Christians were for some time generally regarded as a Jewish sect. The last forty years had been a necessary period of transition from the old economy to the new. But, with the entire overthrow of the Jewish State, Christianity appeared in its true character as a religion for the whole world.

PAULINE EPISTLES.

These sacred Epistles contain the last and fullest discoveries of the Divine scheme of salvation; removing much previous obscurity, and embracing some important subjects, which had been imperfectly understood before. One of these was the nature of Christ's reign; which the apostles, with the rest of their countrymen, had erroneously expected to find accompanied with earthly pomp and splendor: but the Epistles show the spiritual and heavenly views which they derived from their Divine Teacher. Here, also, we see the disciples of Christ,

who at first could not believe his repeated declarations concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, now that he had given to them the Holy Spirit, laying as the foundation of all our hopes, the great truth that "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25; and deducing from it the most powerful motives to the mortification of sin, and the exercise of all Christian virtues. It is, further, in the Epistles, combined with the "Acts of the apostles," that we are clearly taught the calling of the Gentiles "to be fellow heirs with the Jews of the same body, and partakers of the same promises in Christ by the Gospel;" which, Paul tells us, was a truth newly revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, Eph. iii. 3-6; though intimations had been given of it in the ancient prophecies, and in the discourses of our Lord. The Epistles also contain numerous references to the second coming of Christ; which is held up as the great object of hope to Christians, as his first coming had been to the Old Testament saints. Many important relative and social duties, of which little is said elsewhere, are particularly treated of here; the Holy Spirit having graciously directed the sacred writers to enlarge upon such points of doctrine and practice as would be for the benefit of the Church in all ages, so as to afford a complete code of Christian morals.

No little obscurity has been caused by the modern divisions into chapters and verses, which frequently separate parts closely connected in the same chain of reasoning. On this point, Locke's advice is valuable. After showing how difficult it would be fully to comprehend any ordinary letter as long as that of Paul to the Romans, if it were divided into sixteen chapters, to be read at so many different times, he observes that the mind of the writer could only be understood by reading the whole letter through at once, in order to ascertain its main object and scope; or, if it had several parts and purposes in it, not dependent one upon another, to discover what those different matters were, and to mark the boundaries of the several parts. By repeated perusals in a similar way, with a close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses, he says, he at length obtained a good general view of the apostle's main purpose in writing the Epistle, the chief branches of his discourse, the arguments he used, and the disposition of the whole.

1. ROMANS.

This Epistle is a summary of God's dealing with mankind, from the first adoption of one portion to closer connection with him — i. e. to sonship and inheritance of a promise. This election of a particular family is illustrated by a master-potter selecting out of his bed of clay one portion for his choicest fabrics, meet vessels for the master's highest use: the particular clay was selected because of its freedom from flaw, and the rest rejected because tainted with flaws, but not rejected absolutely, since it has a position in the household, useful, but less honored. The absence of flaw is lack of worldliness or irreligion; its excellence is the possession of unquestioning faith — a special capacity for receiving the Divine impress, to be moulded at God's will, and so convey to others, by precept and example, the Divine standard of perfection and the revelation of the truth. This was the peculiar quality seen by the Omniscient in the character of Abraham, which led to his call and adoption. Hence he became the "Father of the Faithful" and the "Friend of God." But it was a quality not transmitted by bodily generation; nor were the privileges accorded to Abraham, and promised to his seed, an inheritance descending by hereditary right, but resumed by God, the Giver, at each decease, and rewarded at his decision, who "looketh on the heart." Hence "they are not all Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" of God; i. e. "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God" ix. 6-8. Acceptance by God is the reward of faith; by it Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, were adopted; from want of it, Ishmael, Esau, and the three eldest sons of Jacob were rejected, and finally the whole Jewish nation, the Gentiles being received instead, through faith. Because of unbelief the former were broken off, and the latter stand by faith.

Summary. 1. Sinfulness of the human race: *a.* of the heathen i.; *b.* of the Jews ii.; *c.* Comparison of Jews and Gentiles. 2. The Plan of Salvation explained *a.* in theory iii.; *b.* by illustration iv, v. 3. Its value: *a.* union with Christ vi.; *b.* as servants of Christ vi.; *c.* supplying defects of the Law vii. 4. Justification by Faith: *a.* Christian's duty and privilege; *b.* cause of rejection of same, election of others, of Abraham's seed;

c. blindness and final rejection of the Jews. 5. Development of truth xii.-xv. 6. Personal communications xv.-xvii.

It was probably written from Corinth, A. D. 58, and sent by Phœbe xvi. 1, 2.

2. FIRST CORINTHIANS.

This Epistle was evidently written from Ephesus, after Paul had made one visit to Corinth, and when he was about to make another. See ch. ii. 1; iv. 19; xvi. 5.

The occasion of this Epistle seems to have been, partly, to reply to one which Paul had received from the Church, requesting his advice and instruction on some points; (see ch. vii. 1); and, partly, to correct some disorders prevailing among them, of which he had heard from some of their members, ch. i. 11; v. 1; xi. 18, which had occasioned him deep concern, and had led him to send Timothy to Corinth, ch. iv. 17.

The evils which Paul sought to correct among the Corinthians related to the following subjects:

Party-divisions, which had arisen apparently from disputes among them as to the comparative excellence of their favorite teachers, ch. i. 10-16; iii. 4-6. A fondness for philosophy and eloquence, to which some of the Corinthian teachers made high pretensions, ch. i. 17, &c. Notorious immorality was tolerated amongst them, ch. v. Law-suits were carried on by one against another before heathen judges, contrary to the rules of Christian wisdom and love, and sometimes even to the principles of justice, ch. vi. 1-8. Licentious indulgence was not so firmly denounced and so carefully avoided as the purity of Christianity required, ch. vi. 9-20. In their religious assemblies, the female members of the church, in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, had manifested an unfeminine deportment, laying aside the vail, the distinguishing mark of their sex, ch. xi. 3-10. The Lord's supper had been perverted from its original purpose, by the unworthy and irreverent manner in which it was celebrated, ch. vi. 20-34.; some having made it an occasion of joviality, and a source of humiliation to their poorer brethren, ver. 20, 21. Miraculous gifts, especially the gift of tongues, had been misused for the purposes of ostentation, ch. xiv. And the momentous doctrine of the resurrection had been denied or questioned, ch. xv. 12.

The matters upon which the Corinthians had requested

Paul's instructions are 1. Marriage, and the duties in regard to it in their circumstances, ch. vii.; 2. the effect which their conversion to Christianity produced upon a prior state of circumcision or of slavery, ch. vii. 17-24; and 3. their duty with reference to eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, ch. viii. They had, probably, also addressed some questions to him respecting the employment of spiritual gifts, and the order to be observed in their religious assemblies.

3. SECOND CORINTHIANS.

This was called for by the effect of the first. In the interval occurred the riot at Ephesus (headed by Demetrius) and St. Paul's expulsion. Timothy and Titus had both been sent to Corinth, and at Troas he waited their return in vain, till he was bowed down with anxiety and evil foreboding. Titus at last brought sufficiently cheering accounts; the Church, as a whole, had bowed to the reproofs of Paul; the incestuous man had been expelled and brought to repentance; the Gentile license had been restrained; confidence between the church and its founder had been restored; but the Judaizer had been reinforced by some bearing "letters of commendation" from some higher authority, and now were arrogant in their supremacy.

The principal contents of this Epistle are as follow:

1. The writer expresses his gratitude for the Divine consolation granted to him, states the reasons of his delay in visiting Corinth; and refers to the case of the guilty person upon whom discipline had been exercised; whom, being penitent, he exhorts them to restore to their communion, ch. i. 12-ii. 13.

2. He alludes to his labor in the service of the Gospel and their success, and is thereby led to speak of the difference between the ministry under the Old Covenant and under the New, ch. iii. He describes the principles and motives by which he and his brethren were actuated in fulfilling their ministry; and exhorts the Corinthians not to frustrate the great objects of the Gospel by the neglect of Christian discipline and purity, ch. iv.-vii.

3. Then, resuming a subject referred to in his former Epistle, with persuasive earnestness he recommends to them the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and shows the advantages of such services, ch. viii., ix.

4. He vindicates his apostolic authority against the insinuations of the false teachers; and contrasts his own gifts, labors, sufferings, with the character and conduct of those pretenders who opposed him, ch. x., xi.; he refers, in proof of the Divine approval, to some extraordinary visions and revelations with which he had been favored, ch. xii. 1-11; shows the openness, sincerity, and disinterestedness of his whole conduct; and, after a few affectionate admonitions to self-examination, and to love and holiness, closes the Epistle with a prayer and benediction, ch. xii. 11-21; xiii.

4. GALATIANS.

Galatia was a large province in the centre of Asia Minor. It derived this name from the Gauls, who conquered the country and settled in it, about 280 B. C.: it was also called Gallo-Græcia, on account of the Greek colonies which afterwards became intermingled with them. About 189 B. C. it fell under the power of Rome, and became a Roman province 26 B. C. The inhabitants were but partially civilized, and their system of idolatry was extremely gross and debasing.

Paul and Silas travelled through this region about A. D. 51, and formed churches in it, which Paul visited again in his second journey three years afterwards. This Epistle was probably written soon after his first visit. See Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23; Gal. i. 6. 8; iv, 13. 19.

It appears that, after having received the Gospel with great joy and readiness from the apostle's lips, many of these converts, amongst whom were not a few Jews and proselytes, had been perverted by some Judaizing teachers, who had taught them that the observance of the ceremonial requirements of the law of Moses was essential to salvation. This party seem, also, to have questioned Paul's authority; insinuating that he was inferior to Peter and the other apostles at Jerusalem, from whom they professed to have derived their views and authority. To settle these important matters, in which the apostle evidently considered that the very life and soul of Christianity was at stake, he wrote this Epistle with his own hand, ch. vi. 11, contrary to his usual practice of dictating his letters.

5. EPHESIANS.

This Epistle is supposed to have been the first of those written by Paul, while he was a prisoner at Rome; and, like the two which follow it, is remarkable for a peculiar pathos and elevation of thought and feeling. His whole mind seems to have been filled with transcendent excellency of the privileges and hopes of believers in Christ, the all-comprehensive character of the Christian dispensation, and its certain triumphs and glorious results.

Anxious for the welfare of his Ephesian converts, the apostle was about to send Tychicus to them; and he wrote this Epistle, one object of which was to remove any feelings of distrust or discouragement which the intelligence of his imprisonment might have produced in their minds; and to prevent that circumstance being taken advantage of by Jewish zealots to lower his apostolic authority, or oppose the great truth in which he gloried — the unity and universality of the Church as the body of Christ.

This Epistle may be divided into two parts: 1. Doctrinal, ch. i.-iii.; and 2. Practical, ch. iv.-vi.

1. After the opening salutation, Paul breaks forth into expressions of praise to God for the blessings of redemption, dwells on the two wonderful displays of omnipotent grace, first in the glorification of Christ, and then in that of his regenerated people, ch. i.; ii. 1-10, and reminds the Ephesians of their former heathen state of spiritual death and distance from God, and of the great change in their condition by being now admitted to the fellowship of the saints, ch. ii. 11-22. Then, describing himself as a prisoner in the cause of Christ for the sake of the Gentiles, he speaks of the special revelation and commission granted to him in reference to them.

In the remaining chapters of the Epistle the apostle beseeches them to maintain a conduct and spirit worthy of the exalted privileges to which they had been called; reminds them of the great ends which the spiritual gifts bestowed upon them were designed to promote, enjoins upon them a course of conduct in direct contrast to that of the heathen around them and to their own former lives; exhorts them particularly to unity, truthfulness, meekness, honesty, and industry; to purity of speech; to kindness and generosity, after the example of Christ; and

to universal uprightness and holiness of conduct, ch. iv.; v. 1-20. He then enforces, by motives peculiar to the Gospel, an exemplary discharge of all relative duties, ch. v. 21-vi. 9; concluding with animated exhortations to fortitude, watchfulness, and prayer: followed by a commendation of Tychicus, the bearer of the Epistle, and by his apostolic benediction, ch. vi. 10-24.

6. PHILIPPIANS.

This Epistle was manifestly written at Rome, see ch. i. 12-14; iv. 22, and, probably, during the latter part of the apostle's first captivity in that city. For Paul, at the time of writing it, anticipated a speedy decision of his case, and hoped to obtain his release, ch. i. 25, 27; ii. 23, 24. It appears to have been written on the occasion of the return of Epaphroditus, whom the Philippian church had sent to Rome with a pecuniary contribution for the apostle's relief during his imprisonment, and who, while zealously performing this service, had fallen dangerously ill: the tidings of which so afflicted the Philippians, that the apostle was induced, upon his recovery, to send him back sooner than he had intended, ch. ii. 24-30.

The church at Philippi appears to have been one of the most pure and generous of that age. Its members showed the tenderest regard for Paul. Twice while he was at Thessalonica, and once when at Corinth, they had generously sent to him contributions for his support, which he accepted, to prevent the Gospel being burdensome to more recent converts, ch. iv. 15, 16; 2 Cor. xi. 9. They had also cheerfully borne many sufferings for their adherence to the Saviour, ch. i. 28-30. Their conduct had been uniformly so exemplarily that he had only to rejoice over them. Accordingly, in this Epistle he pours forth his heart in expressions of devout gratitude and joy, mingled with commendations and counsels.

The Epistle may be divided into three parts.

1. After an affectionate introduction, Paul refers to his own condition as a prisoner at Rome; and, lest they should be cast down on his account, assures them that his imprisonment had not hindered, but had rather promoted, the Gospel, ch. i. 1-14. Then he earnestly exhorts the Philippians to maintain a conduct worthy of the Gospel; to be steadfast and courageous, counting it an honor to suffer for Christ; and to cultivate a

loving, humble, generous, self-sacrificing spirit, after the example of the Lord Jesus, ch. i. 14-30; ii.

2. He then exhorts them to rejoice in their Christian privileges; and to be on their guard against Judaizing teachers; their teaching should be regarded as utterly worthless, in comparison with the surpassing excellency of the knowledge of Christ, ch. iii. 1-12; and then, referring to his own holy ambition to strive after perfection, urges upon the Philippians a similar spirit; contrasting with this the conduct of some false professors, against whom he had previously warned them, ch. iii. 12-21; iv. 1.

3. Admonitions are addressed to individual members of the church; followed by exhortations to holy joy, moderation, prayer, and thanksgiving, ch. iv. 2-10. The Epistle concludes with grateful acknowledgments of the repeated proofs of affection, care, and sympathy, which he had received from the Philippians, in which he rejoiced for their sakes; and with salutation and a benediction, ch. iv. 10-23.

7. COLOSSIANS.

Nothing is known of the foundation of the Church at Colosse, a chief city of Phrygia: but the Christians there were in danger of relapse, from a tendency to asceticism, Judaism, and angel-worship. Paul sets before them the majesty and all-sufficiency of Christ, as the source of all spiritual blessings. Christian perfection is attained by the practical realization of this truth influencing the daily life. The attention is fixed upon the Person of Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice completes the typical offerings of Judaism, crucifies the old man with his affections and lusts, while the resurrection unfolds a new life in Him, elevating the soul above earthly objects more effectually than mere mortification of the flesh to quench out the emotions of the heart, according to a Stoic philosophy.

This Epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, ch. i. 24; iv. 18; and probably at an early period of it, about the same time as those to the Ephesians and to Philemon; as they appear to have been all sent by the same persons, one of whom, Onesimus, was returning to his master Philemon at Colosse. Epaphras, the principal teacher of this church, was with Paul at the time, and had informed him of the state of the church, which upon the whole was flourishing.

The striking resemblance between this Epistle and that to the Ephesians, indicates some similarity in the tendencies of the two churches.

THE THESSALONIANS.

Thessalonica was the capital of a district of Macedonia, and the seat of a Roman governor. Its position on the great Egnatian road, and at the head of an excellent harbor, augmented its trade and wealth; and brought to it a mixed population of Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It is still a flourishing commercial town, bearing the slightly varied name Soloniki.

The Gospel was first preached here by Paul and Silas shortly after their release from imprisonment at Philippi, *Acts ch. xvii. 1-10*. Paul addressed himself first, agreeably to his constant practice, to the Jews, and afterwards, with more success, to the Gentiles. What time he spent here does not distinctly appear; but it was evidently more than the three weeks, during which he reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue on the Sabbaths. Compare *Acts xvii. 4, 5; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8; and Phil. iv. 16.*

The church which he formed during this period, was composed partly of Jews and Jewish proselytes, many of whom were women of rank and influence (*Acts xvii. 4,*) and partly of converts from idolatry, *ch. i. 9.*

Being driven away by the violence of the Jews, Paul left the newly-planted church in such difficulties as excited his anxiety respecting them, and led him to send Timothy from Athens, to encourage and comfort them under the persecutions to which they were exposed, *ch. iv. 2.* Timothy returned to Paul at Corinth, (whither he had gone in the meantime), and brought him so good an account of the steadfastness of the Thessalonian Christians, as filled him with joy and gratitude, *ch. iii. 6-9*, and reawakened his desire to visit them. But, having been repeatedly disappointed in his plans for that purpose, *ch. ii 17, 18*, he wrote his first letter instead.

8. FIRST THESSALONIANS.

This Epistle was written from Athens, and sent by the hands of Timothy. From it we learn:—The apostle's primary success and unflinching courage in preaching; not flattering, but warning; not self-asserting, but displaying a blameless example;

entreating, exhorting, rebuking; his self-support by manual labor. His converts were principally from idolatry i. 9, but partly Jewish proselyte women of rank and influence (Acts xvii. 4).

Summary. 1. St. Paul's gratitude for their eager acceptance of the Gospel, and fidelity in maintaining it; encouraging them in persecutions by his own example. 2. Practical exhortations: *a.* against their besetting sin; *b.* encouraging the cultivation of Christian virtues iv. v. 3. Consolation to those bereft of friends, by unfolding the glories of speedy resurrection, and transformation to a glorified body.

9. SECOND THESSALONIANS.

This was probably written from Corinth, after St. Paul received an answer to the First, to correct an erroneous impression gained from the vividness of his picture of the resurrection; viz. that it was near at hand, which led to a neglect of practical duties.

Summary. 1. Affectionate commendations, and exhortations to perseverance. 2. Answer to false anticipations of the second advent. 3. Appeal for their prayers, and practical precepts for their guidance.

10. FIRST TIMOTHY.

Timothy was an inhabitant, perhaps a native, of Lystra, Acts xvi. 1. His father was a Greek; but his mother and grandmother were pious Jewesses, by whom he was carefully trained in a knowledge of the Scriptures. He was chosen by Paul, on his second visit to Lycaonia, as a companion in his journeys and labors, and is frequently mentioned by him with paternal tenderness, and commendation for his faithful attachment to him. See ch. i. 2, 18, &c.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine when this Epistle was written. It was evidently addressed to Timothy at Ephesus, and when Paul was either in Macedonia, or on his way thither. See ch. i. 3. From Acts xx. 1, we learn that Paul left Ephesus after the uproar caused by Demetrius, and went to Macedonia; and some learned critics have supposed that this Epistle was written at that time.

This and the two following Epistles, though written to individuals, were evidently intended as public charges; con-

veying instruction both to ministers and churches as to the nature and duties of a Christian profession and of the Christian ministry.

The Epistle appears to have two chief objects:

1. To counteract the false doctrines of Jewish teachers; who, while professing adherence to the law, taught doctrines at variance with its holy requirements. Their fallacies and the contrary truths are forcibly exhibited in ch. i; iv. 7-10; vi. 3-5, 20, 21.

2. To guide and encourage Timothy in the duties of his office; directing him as to 1. public devotions, ch. ii. 1-8; 2. the duties and behavior of Christian women, ch. ii. 9-12; 3. church officers, ch. iii. 1-13; 4. his own teaching, ch. iii. 14; iv. 10; 5. his personal holiness, ch. iv. 11-16; and 6. his church administration in the treatment of offenders, of widows, of good elders and bad, of slaves, of the rich; and the duties of those several classes of persons, ch. v., vi.

11. SECOND TIMOTHY.

This Epistle was written A. D. 66, from Rome, in the interval between one trial of the apostle before the emperor and that at which he was condemned to death iv. 16, 17. He viewed his case as desperate iv. 16, and his martyrdom as imminent iv. 6-8; and he entreats Timothy to come to him at once iv. 9, 21, to be with him at his last trial. It has all the tone of a farewell letter to a loved friend; full of love i. 1-5, encouragement i. 6; ii. 15, warning ii. 16; iii. 9, objurgation iv. 1-5, concluding with personal matters iv. 6-22.

The Epistle furnishes a noble view of the consolation afforded by Christianity in the midst of suffering, and face to face with death. It contains a few unique incidents of the life of St. Paul, between his two imprisonments; also of St. Timothy — viz: the falling away from the former of some Asiatic converts of note i. 15; of the injury done him by Alexander, mentioned in Acts xix. 33; of the lapse of Demas iv. 10; his reconciliation with St. Mark iv. 11; of another visit to Corinth and Milutes iv. 20, and probably Troas iv. 13; and of St. Timothy's presence with him on his first journey iii. 11; the names of his grandmother and mother, and his consecration by St. Paul i. 5, 6.

12. TITUS.

Titus was the first bishop of Crete, was consecrated by St. Paul, and was the first Christian convert who was not circumcised, but was taken by St. Paul to Jerusalem to try the matter, when the council decided against its necessity, Gal. ii. 3; Acts xv. It is not known when the Church at Crete was founded, but it was probably after St. Paul's first imprisonment, on his way to Asia, and that he then left Titus in charge of it. The position of its bishop was one of peculiar difficulty; the people had sunk into gross immorality, instability and lying. St. Paul advises his deputy upon the course he should take. The Epistle resembles the first to Timothy, was probably written about the same time, and gives a condensed code of instruction on doctrine, morals and discipline.

Summary: 1. Apostolic salutation. 2. Church organization: *a.* Qualifications of elders, etc.; *b.* Suppression of false teachers i.; *c.* The Christian character of aged men and women, young of both sexes, and servants ii. 3. Personal advice to Titus iii.

13. PHILEMON.

This inspired model of private Christian correspondence was addressed by the Apostle Paul to Philemon, one of his converts at Colosse (compare vs. 2, 10, 19, with Col. iv. 9, 17), of whom nothing more is known than may be gathered from the letter. From this it has been supposed, with perhaps hardly sufficient reason, that Philemon was an elder or deacon in the church, that Apphia was his wife, and Archippus his son or brother.

This Epistle was evidently written (see vs. 1, 10, 23) and sent at the same time as that to the Colossians (see Col. iv. 8; compare also vs. 23, 24, with Col. iv. 10-14). Onesimus, the subject of this Epistle and the bearer of both, was a slave (probably a domestic servant) of Philemon, who, having fled from his master, had found his way to Rome; and, while there, had been converted by the instrumentality of Paul, ver. 10. After a time, Paul, thinking it right that he should return to his master, wrote this elegant and persuasive letter in order to secure for him a kind reception.

After an affectionate salutation from himself and Timothy, the apostle expresses his thankfulness at hearing of the good reputation which Philemon as a Christian enjoyed: and then

gracefully introduces the main subject of his letter; requesting as "Paul the good," now a prisoner for their common faith, what he might as an apostle have commanded. Acknowledging the fault of Onesimus, he mentions the happy change which had taken place in him; and hints that his flight had been overruled for his master's benefit as well as his own; and entreats that he may be received back, no longer as a mere slave, but as a beloved Christian brother. He then delicately proposes to make good any loss Philemon might have sustained; whilst he intimates how great were his friend's obligations to himself.

This short letter is invaluable, as affording an example of humility, courteousness, and freedom, in the intercourse of Christian friendship: and we cannot but suppose that the gentleness and address of the apostle's pleading were effectual.

14. HEBREWS.

The greatest weight of testimony favors the opinion that St. Paul was the author (though probably St. Luke was the writer) of this Epistle. It was probably composed by the former when in very strict custody, either at Cæsarea or at Rome A. D. 62-64, just before his martyrdom (2 Tim. iv. 6), when denied writing materials, and dictated by him to St. Luke, who then committed it to writing from memory. Some think we have only a Greek translation of an original Hebrew text. It was addressed specially to those Aramaic Christians of Palestine who were exposed to severe persecution from their fellow-countrymen, who adhered to the expected return of visible glory to Israel. Brought up in fond reminiscence of the glories of the past, they seemed in Christianity to be receding from their peculiar privileges of intercommunion with God as a favored people. Angels, Moses, the high-priest; were superseded by Jesus, the peasant of Nazareth; the Sabbath by the Lord's-day, the Old Covenant by the New; while temple and sacrifices were obsolete. What, they asked, did Christianity give in their place? And St. Paul answers, Christ; i. e. God for their Mediator and Intercessor; superior to angels, because nearer to the Father; to Moses, because a son, not a servant; more sympathizing than the high-priest, and more powerful in intercession, because he pleads his own blood. The Sabbath is but a type of the rest in heaven, the

New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old. Christ's atonement is perfect and eternal, and heaven itself the true Jerusalem, of which the Church is the temple, whose worshippers are all advanced into the holy of holies.

Thus the exceptional ministration of angels is superseded by the continuous ministration of man.

The legislative ministration of Moses is perfected by the divine Lawgiver.

The typical sacrifice of the high-priest by a real sacrifice of a Priest of higher order.

The indirect communion with God is supplanted by the direct union of God and man in Christ, and the communion of the Head with his body, the Church.

Summary. A. Doctrinal Portion, showing the superiority of the Christian to the Jewish Dispensation i.-x. 18. 1. Because its author is superior *a.* to Angels, and in him humanity is exalted above them i.-ii. 18; *b.* to Moses, because of 1. his position; he is the builder, son, master of the house; Moses part of, a servant in, the house; 2. his acquired inheritance—viz. perfect eternal rest in heaven, instead of imperfect transitory rest in Canaan iii.-iv. 13; *c.* to the Aaronic high priest, 1. as to his office; 2. as to his nature; 3. as to his vocation iv.-v. 10. A digression of practical exhortation (v. 11-vi. 20). *d.* To the primæval high-priest of superior dispensation vi. 21-vii. 28. 2. Because the Old Covenant was imperfect, being incapable of making its members perfect. Comparison of the typical and real sacrifice of atonement, illustrated by the service of the sanctuary, compared with that of the Christian Sacrifice viii. 1-ix. 19. B. Practical Portion. *a.* Warning against relapse into Judaism; *b.* encouraging to peace and holiness; *c.* inculcating practical duties; *d.* Conclusion. Special advice to individuals (probably catechumens).

III. GENERAL EPISTLES.

I. JAMES.

There were two apostles named James or Jacob; one of whom was the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, and was put to death by Herod, as related in Acts xii. 2; and the other, called James the Less, or the Little, Mark xv. 40, prob-

ably in allusion to his stature, was the son of Alphæus or Cleopas (See Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Acts i. 18; Luke xxiv. 18); and being a near kinsman of the Lord, is called his brother, Gal. i. 19, &c. The latter of these is commonly supposed to have been the writer of this Epistle.

After most of the apostles had gone to other countries, James appears to have resided permanently in Jerusalem, superintending the affairs of the Church in that city and neighborhood (see Acts xii. 17; xv. 13-29; xxi. 18-24; Gal. i. 18, 19; ii. 9, 12); and maintaining such reputation for eminent sanctity as to acquire, even among his unbelieving countrymen, the honorable appellation of "the Just." It was therefore most appropriate that James should be directed to address this letter to his own people, exhibiting to them, not so much the peculiar doctrines, as the elevating and sanctifying influence of the Gospel. For he knew well that they had become too much accustomed to a professed belief in God's Word, whether spoken by Moses or by Christ, without allowing it to affect their hearts or conduct. Hence the apparent (though not real) discrepancy between him and Paul on the subject of justification by faith. The design of Paul was to point out to those who were seeking justification by their own attempts to obey the law, that the only meritorious cause of justification is the atonement of Christ; and that forgiveness of sins and holiness can be obtained only by heartily believing the Gospel. James, on the other hand, in opposing the Jewish notion, that a mere faith in religion, a mere assent to its doctrines, without a corresponding life, could be a ground of justification before God, shows that there can be no genuine faith which is not productive of good works. Both these statements, it is evident, were necessary to the full exposition of the great doctrine of justification by faith.

This Epistle is supposed to have been written not before A. D. 58, and probably in 61, the year before the apostle's martyrdom. It is sententious and forcible in style; while its vigorous practical good sense is clothed with vivid and striking imagery. It thus strikingly resembles both in matter and manner the teaching of our Lord; and, like it, seems adapted to lead the Jews, through a spiritual appreciation of the excellencies of his own law, to a perception of the superior value of Gospel truth.

2. FIRST PETER.

Peter, whose original name was Simeon or Simon, was a native of Bethsaida, on the sea of Galilee; and the son of Jonas (whence he is called Bar-jona Matt. xvi. 17). He was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist, but was led by his master's testimony to attach him to the Divine Teacher. For some time after this, the two brothers continued to follow their business, until they were summoned by our Lord to be in constant attendance upon him Matt. iv. 18-20; after which they were his devoted followers.

This Epistle was addressed to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout the different provinces of Asia Minor; yet not altogether without reference to the numerous Gentile converts which those churches contained. It appears to have been written from Babylon ch. v. 13, which some have supposed to be a mystical name for Rome. This notion has been favored by writers of the Church of Rome, in order to prove the contested point of Peter's residence in the imperial city. But there is no evidence that, at that early period, the name Babylon was ever given to Rome; nor can any reason be assigned why such a name should at that time be applied to it; or why Peter should choose a figurative name, which, though adapted to a symbolical style, is plainly unsuited to epistolary writing. It appears, therefore, most reasonable to take the name in its obvious and natural signification, like all the other names mentioned in the apostolic Epistles; and to refer it either to the region of Babylonia, or to the city of Seleucia, which was built out of the ruins of the ancient city, and in its immediate neighborhood, and which, in the apostolic age, bore the name of Babylon. The Jews were very numerous there, and were not likely to be overlooked by the "apostle of the circumcision;" and among them it is probable that a Christian church had been planted.

With respect to the time at which this Epistle was written, nothing can be certainly determined. It is commonly supposed to have been about the year 64; but some have ascribed to it a much earlier date; in support of which, among other reasons, it is observed, that there is no reference to any of those heresies, schisms, and disorders, which so soon sprang up in

the churches, and to which allusion is made in the Second Epistle.

3. SECOND PETER.

This Epistle was written not long before the apostle's martyrdom, ch. i. 14, and it was evidently addressed to the same persons as the former, ch. iii. 1. But, while the main object of the First Epistle was to confirm and encourage those to whom it was addressed, under suffering and persecution, the principal design of this was to guard them against teachers of error, profane scoffers, and apostate professors, whose character is described, and whose certain destruction is foretold: while it urges, as the best preservative against their pernicious influence, the diligent cultivation of every Christian grace. The Epistle is, however, replete with the most important instructions on a variety of subjects; and it is remarkable for the energy with which the writer inculcates holiness, and the solemn yet affectionate manner in which he testifies against the delusions of those who neglect it.

4. FIRST JOHN.

This sacred writing, though called an Epistle, has more of the character of a discourse on the doctrines and duties of Christianity. It appears to have been addressed to believers generally. The writer has not deemed it necessary to prefix his name; but its remarkable similarity, both in matter and expressions, to the other writings of the apostle John, confirm the testimony of the early Christians, and afford satisfactory evidence that he was its author. It is commonly supposed to have been written from Ephesus, but at what precise date is uncertain.

One object of this Epistle evidently was to counteract some important errors which were beginning to arise. There seem to have been some who denied the deity of Christ; others who denied or explained away his proper humanity, and the reality of his sufferings and death as an atoning sacrifice; and others who held notions subversive of the obligations of believers to holiness. The seeds of error which were early sown in the Church quickly grew and ripened into wide-spreading heresies: the advocates of which were called by different names, such as Ebionites, Cerinthians, Docetæ,

Gnostics, &c. Whether they had made much progress at the time this Epistle was written is very doubtful; but its contents are such as to refute and expose these and many other erroneous sentiments, both of ancient and modern times, and in this respect it possesses peculiar value.

5. SECOND JOHN.

This Epistle is addressed to a Christian matron, whose name is not given. Some indeed have supposed that the salutation may be rendered "The Elder to the Lady Eclecta," or, "The Elder to the elect Cyria." Others have thought that the church was denoted by this name; either some particular church to whom the Epistle was sent, or the Church at large. But it is much more probable that some eminent Christian lady well known in the Church at that time, was addressed by the title of "The elect Lady," and that some other honorable woman nearly related to her was intended by her "elect sister," v. 13.

"The Elder" might probably be applied to John, when all the other apostles were dead, as a title of honorable distinction; for he was the senior of the whole Church; or he might modestly, yet as claiming authority, use it upon this occasion.

This short Epistle touches very briefly on the same points as the General Epistle; and it is particularly interesting as a memorial of the exemplary character of a Christian matron and mother, honored and loved by "that disciple whom Jesus loved.

6. THIRD JOHN.

That the Gaius or Caius, to whom this Epistle is addressed, was the person mentioned in Rom. xvi. 23, and 1 Cor. i. 14, though not certain, is highly probable; as he appears to have been an eminent Christian, particularly distinguished for his hospitality to Christian evangelists or missionaries. The apostle expresses his affectionate joy at this and other evidences of his piety; cautions him against one Diotrephes, noted for his ambition and turbulence; and recommends Demetrius to his friendship; deferring other matters to a personal interview.

7. JUDE.

Jude, "brother of James," is supposed to be the apostle (surnamed Thaddæus and Lebbæus), and a near relation of our Lord Matt. x. 3; xiii. 55; Luke vi. 16.

The Epistle is remarkable for the quotation of an otherwise unrecorded saying of Enoch (ver. 14), and a tradition of a dispute between Michael the archangel and Satan regarding the body of Moses (ver. 9). Its date, place, and occasion, are unknown; but it seems to denounce the same false teachers as those rebuked in 2 Peter ii., and in very similar language; warning them by the example of the fallen angels, of Cain, the impenitent in the times of Noah, of the wicked cities of the plain, of Korah, and Balaam; asserting the certainty of the future judgment and punishment of the wicked.

IV. PROPHETICAL.

REVELATIONS OF ST. JOHN.

This is the only prophetic book of the New Testament, and much of it remains still unfulfilled. It closes the canon of Scripture and the revelation of God to man. There is satisfactory evidence of its being genuine. Justin Martyr, living sixty years after its supposed date, ascribes it to St. John; Papias acknowledges its inspiration; Irenæus (disciple of Polycarp, who was St. John's own disciple) testifies to his authorship, and that he had himself received the explanation of one passage in it from those who had conversed with the apostle about it. To these may be added Clement Alexander, Theophilus, Tertullian, Origin, Cyprian, Jerome, Athanasius, etc.

St. John was banished by Domitian, after a vain attempt to martyr him, to Patmos; but on the emperor's death, A. D. 96, he returned, under a general amnesty, to Ephesus, and resumed the supervision of that Church. While in exile he saw and recorded these visions, in the introductory chapters of which incidental evidence is furnished that a considerable interval must have elapsed between the foundation of the Asiatic churches and the composition of this book; e. g. they are reproached for faults and corruptions that do not speedily arise; the Nicolaitans have separated themselves into a sect; there had been open persecutions, and Antipas had been martyred at Pergamos, ii. 13.

Summary. 1. Prefatory: The divine authority of the record. The narrative of the first vision, respecting the churches of Proconsular Asia i.

2. The messages of the several churches ii., iii., viz:

a. Ephesus: reproof for forsaking its first love and first works.

b. Smyrna: commendation of works, poverty, endurance of persecution.

c. Pergamos: reproof for false doctrine, immoral conduct, idolatrous pollution.

d. Thyatira: reproof to one party for similar corruptions; commendation to the other for their fidelity.

e. Sardis: reproof for spiritual deadness with mere nominal life.

f. Philadelphia: approval of its steadfastness and patience.

g. Laodicea: rebuke for lukewarmness. These predictions have long been fulfilled, but the remainder of the book is still a mystery, though generally regarded as prophetic of the history of the Church from the close of the first century to the end of time. By some the major part is considered to have had its fulfillment in the early ages of the church; by others to have been gradually realized by successive religious revivals and persecutions; by others it is regarded as a picture of the historical epochs of the world and the Church. Its outline is as follows:

3. The Prophetic Visions.

a. The divine glory, sealed book and the Lamb, iv., v.

b. The vision of the opening of six seals; the sealing of 144,000 Israelites; the worship by innumerable multitudes of saints; and the opening of the seventh seal, vi., vii.

c. The vision of an angel offering incense on the golden altar, followed by the sounding of six trumpets, viii., ix.

d. The vision of an angel with an open scroll; seven thunders, and the angel's proclamation, x.; measuring the temple altar; the two witnesses; sounding of the seventh trumpet, x., xi.

e. The vision of the woman and the dragon; the conflict between Michael and the dragon; rescue of the woman; the rising of a beast from the sea; and of another from the earth, xii., xiii.

f. The vision of the Lamb and 144,000 on Mount Zion; the proclamations of the three angels; the harvest and vintage, xiv

g. The pouring out of seven vials of wrath, xv., xvi.; the woman sitting upon the beast xvii, the angel's proclamation of the fall of Babylon, followed by songs of praise and triumph, xviii., xix. 1-10.

h. The vision of the "World of God," attended by the faithful, who destroy the three great enemies—viz: the beast, false prophet and confederate kings, xix. 11-21; the binding of the dragon for 1000 years; the reign of righteousness and final conflict, xix. 11-xx. 10.

i. Visions of the final judgment, the new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem, xx. 10-xxii. 5, with closing addresses from the angel, Christ and St. John, enjoining the universal proclamation of these visions, and attesting the certainty of the predictions, xxii. 6-21.

A SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS. Describes the creation; gives the history of the old world, and of the steps taken by God toward the foundation of the theocracy.

EXODUS. The history of Israel's departure from Egypt; the giving of the law; the tabernacle.

LEVITICUS. The ceremonial law.

NUMBERS. The census of the people; the story of the wanderings in the wilderness.

DEUTERONOMY. The law rehearsed; the death of Moses.

JOSHUA. The story of the conquest and the division of Canaan among the tribes.

JUDGES. The history of the nation from Joshua to Samuel.

RUTH. The story of the ancestors of the royal family of Judah.

FIRST SAMUEL. The story of the nation during the judgeship of Samuel and the reign of Saul.

SECOND SAMUEL. Story of the reign of David.

FIRST AND SECOND KINGS. The books of the kings form only one book in the Hebrew MSS. The history of the nation from Solomon's accession to the destruction of Jerusalem.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES are so called as being the record made by the appointed historiographers of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; they are the official histories of those kingdoms.

EZRA. The story of the return of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, and of the rebuilding of the temple.

NEHEMIAH. A further account of rebuilding of the temple and city.

ESTHER. The story of a Jewess who becomes queen of Persia and saves the Jewish people from destruction.

JOB. The story of the trials of a holy man.

PSALMS. A collection of sacred poems intended for use in the worship of Jehovah.

PROVERBS. The wise sayings of Solomon.

ECCLESIASTES. A poem respecting the vanity of earthly things.

SONGS OF SOLOMON. An allegory relating to the Church.

ISAIAH. Prophecies respecting Christ and his kingdom.

JEREMIAH. Prophecies announcing the captivity of Judah, its sufferings, and the final overthrow of its enemies.

LAMENTATIONS. The utterance of Jeremiah's sorrow upon the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.

EZEKIEL. Messages of warning and comfort to the Jews in their captivity.

DANIEL. A narrative of some of the occurrences of the captivity, and a series of prophecies concerning Christ.

HOSEA. Prophecies relating to Christ and the later days.

JOEL. Prediction of woes upon Judah, and of the favor with which God will receive the penitent.

AMOS. Prediction that Israel and other nations will be punished by conquerors from the north.

OBADIAH. Prediction of the desolation of Edom.

JONAH. Prophecies relating to Nineveh.

MICAH. Predictions relating to the invasions of Shalmaneser and Sennacherib, the Babylonish captivity, and the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem.

NAHUM. Prediction of the downfall of Assyria.

HABAKKUK. A prediction of the doom of the Chaldeans.

ZEPHANIAH. A prediction of the overthrow of Judah, because of idolatry.

HAGGAI. Prophecies concerning the rebuilding of the temple.

ZECHARIAH. Prophecies relating to the rebuilding of the temple, and the Messiah.

MALACHI. Prophecies relating to the calling of the Gentiles, and the coming of Christ.

**A SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH BOOK
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW. A brief history of the life of Christ.

GOSPEL OF ST. MARK. A brief history of the life of Christ, supplying some incidents omitted by St. Matthew.

GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE. The history of the life of Christ, with special reference to his most important acts and discourses.

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN. The life of Christ, giving important discourses not related by the other evangelists.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. The history of the labors of the apostles and of the foundation of the Christian Church.

EPISTLE TO ROMANS. A treatise by St. Paul on the doctrine of justification through Christ.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. A letter from St. Paul to the Corinthians, correcting errors into which they had fallen.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. St. Paul confirms his disciples in their faith, and vindicates his own character.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. Paul maintains that we are justified by faith and not by rites.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. A treatise by Paul on the power of divine grace.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. Paul sets forth the beauty of Christian kindness.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS. Paul warns his disciples against errors, and exhorts to certain duties.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS. Paul exhorts his disciples to continue in the faith and in holy conversation.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS. St. Paul corrects an error concerning the speedy coming of Christ the second time.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY. St. Paul instructs Timothy in the duty of a pastor, and encourages him in the work of the ministry.

EPISTLE TO TITUS. St. Paul encourages Titus in the performance of his ministerial duties.

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON. An appeal to a converted master to a converted escaped slave with kindness.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. St. Paul maintains that Christ is the substance of the ceremonial law.

EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES. A treatise on the efficacy of faith united with good works.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER. Exhortations to a Christian life, with various warnings and predictions.

FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN. Respecting the person of our Lord, and an exhortation to Christian love and conduct.

SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN. St. John warns a converted lady against false teachers.

THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN. A letter to Gaius, praising him for his hospitality.

EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE. Warnings against deceivers.

THE REVELATION. The future of the Church foretold.

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

Although we have no history of this period in Scripture, its events are frequently referred to in prophecy, and sometimes with great particularity. During these four hundred years many important predictions which the prophets had delivered respecting Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and other nations, received their fulfilment; and the principal events, as related by the best heathen historians, wonderfully agree with the inspired prophecies. The following sketch will, however, be limited to the Jewish history.

Judea continued subject to the kings of Persia about two hundred years, but does not appear to have had a separate governor after Nehemiah. It was annexed to the province of Syria; and the administration of its affairs was left to the high-priest, subject to the control of the provincial rulers. This raised the high priesthood to a degree of temporal dignity and power which very soon made it such an object of worldly ambition, as occasioned many violent and disgraceful contests for the office; which, however, could only be held by the descendants of Aaron.

Upon the overthrow of the Persian army by Alexander in the year B. C. 331, Syria and the neighboring countries fell

under his power; and Tyre was taken after an obstinate resistance. Alexander then marched into Judea, to punish the Jews, who, out of regard to their oath to the king of Persia, had granted the Tyrians supplies of provisions, and refused them to him. But it is related that, as he approached Jerusalem, and saw a solemn procession of the people clothed in white coming to meet him, headed by the high-priest Jaddua, and all the priestly race, in their robes of office, God turned his heart to spare and favor them. He continued to them the free enjoyment of their laws and religion, granted them exemption from tribute during their sabbatical years; and when he built the city of Alexandria, placed a great number of Jews there, and gave them many privileges.

After the death of Alexander, Judea became subject to one of his successors, forming part of the monarchy of Egypt. Ptolemy Soter, the king of Egypt, carried many thousands of Jews into that country, settled them there, and treated them kindly, placing them on an equality with the Grecians at Alexandria. Greek being the common language of that city, it was quickly learned by the Jewish settlers, and became the native language of their children who were born there, and who on that account, in process of time, were called Hellenists, or Greek Jews;—a name which afterwards came to be applied generally to all Jews speaking the Greek language in foreign countries. See Acts vi. 1; ix. 29; xi. 20, &c. These Greek Jews had synagogues in Alexandria; in which the five books of Moses, translated into Greek for this purpose, were read every sabbath-day; the writings of the prophets being subsequently added. This translation, which is called the Septuagint, contributed much to spread the knowledge of true religion through the western parts of the world, from the general prevalence of the Greek language. It came into common use among the Jews themselves everywhere, the original Hebrew having become a language little known; and the quotations made from the Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament, by the evangelists and apostles, are often, though not always, from this version.

During the time of Ptolemy Soter, the prosperity of the Jews was much promoted by the internal administration of an excellent high-priest, Simon the Just. He repaired and fortified their city and temple with strong and lofty walls;

and made a spacious reservoir of water, "in compass as a sea." He is said to have completed the canon of the Old Testament, by the addition of the books of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi. The Jews also affirm that Simon was "the last of the Great Synagogue," which is described as having consisted of one hundred and twenty individuals, (among whom were Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, and Malachi), who appear to have been a succession of devoted and patriotic men, who distinguished themselves after the captivity, by their labors in collecting and revising the sacred books, and in settling and improving the civil and religious institutions of their country. Simon died in the year 291 B. C.

After the Jewish nation had been tributary to the kings of Egypt for about a hundred years, (during the last sixty of which it enjoyed almost uninterrupted tranquility under the shadow of their power), it became subject to the kings of Syria. They divided the land, which is now called Palestine, into five provinces; three of which were on the west side of Jordan, namely, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea (though the whole country was frequently called Judea after this time), and two on the eastern side, namely, Trachonitis and Peræa; but the Jews were allowed to be governed by their own laws, under the high-priest and council of the nation.

Judea, being situated between Syria and Egypt, was much affected by the frequent wars in which those countries were engaged; and became frequently the scene of bloody and destructive battles. The evils to which it was thus exposed were considerably aggravated by the corruption and misconduct of its high-priests and chief men, and the increasing wickedness of the people, who began to neglect the temple worship and the observance of the Divine law in a far greater degree than at any period since their return from the captivity.

God saw fit to punish the Jews for this defection by the hand of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who came and plundered the city and temple of Jerusalem with every circumstance of cruelty and profanation that can be conceived, and slew or enslaved great numbers of the inhabitants. For three years and a half they were altogether deprived of their civil and religious liberties. The daily sacrifice was taken away; the temple itself was dedicated by Antiochus to Jupiter Olympius,

whose statue was erected on the altar of burnt-offering; the observance of the law of God was prohibited under the severest penalties; every copy of the sacred writings which could be seized was burnt; and the people were required under pain of death to sacrifice to idols. Never before had the Jews been exposed to so furious a persecution. Numerous as were the apostates, a remnant continued faithful; and these events were doubtless made instrumental in calling the attention of the heathen around to those great principles for which many of the Jews at that time were willing to peril their lives.

At length God raised up a deliverer for his people in the noble family of the Asmoneans. Mattathias, a priest eminent for his piety and resolution, and the father of five sons, encouraged the people, by his example and exhortations, "to stand up for the law;" and having collected around him a large number of faithful men, he undertook to free the nation from the oppression and persecution of the Syrians, and to restore the worship of the God of Israel; but being very old when he engaged in this arduous work, he did not live to see its completion. At his death his eldest son Judas succeeded to the command of the army, in which he was assisted by his four brothers, especially by Simon, the elder of them, who was a man of remarkable prudence. The motto on his standard was, Ex. xv. 11, "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?" The Hebrew words being *Mi Camoka Baalim Jehovah*; and from the initial letters of these words M. C. B. I. was derived the word Maccabi, or Maccabee, which became the surname of the family, and was applied also to all who joined their cause.

The war was carried on for twenty-six years with five successive kings of Syria; and, after many battles, in which the Syrians were generally beaten with great losses, they were driven out of the country; and the Jewish people were restored to their ancient independence, and to the free exercise of their religion. The first care of Judas Maccabeus, on regaining possession of Jerusalem, was to repair and purify the temple for the restoration of the Divine worship; the memory of which was preserved by an annual feast of eight days, called the Feast of the Dedication, John. x. 22.

Under the Maccabean princes, Judea became an entirely free State, supported by regular troops, strong garrisons, and

alliances with other powers, including even Rome itself. The country began to enjoy its former fertility and peacefulness; and the boundaries of the state were extended in the direction of Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, and Idumea. This prosperity, however, was but of short duration. The decline of the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, by the great accession of power which it brought to the Romans, paved the way for the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth. Pompey marched his army into Judea, besieged and took Jerusalem, and made Judea tributary to the Romans; though it was still governed by the Maccabean princes. The last of that family was conquered and deposed by Herod the Great, an Idumean by birth, but of the Jewish religion, who had obtained from the Romans the appointment of king in subjection to them. He considerably enlarged the kingdom, but greatly reduced the power of the high-priesthood, which, instead of being an hereditary office held for life, was now granted and held at the pleasure of the monarch. He was a cruel tyrant to his people, and even to his own children, three of whom he put to death; a slave to his passions, and indifferent by what means he gratified his ambition. But, to preserve the Jews in subjection, and to erect a lasting monument to his own name, he repaired the temple of Jerusalem at a vast expense, and greatly added to its magnificence.

In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Herod, while Augustus was emperor of Rome, the Saviour of the world was born.

Herod was succeeded in the government of the greater part of Palestine by his son Archelaus, who acted with great cruelty and injustice; and in the tenth year of his government, upon a complaint being made against him by the Jews, he was banished by Augustus to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. Publius Sulpitius Quirinius (who, according to the Greek way of writing the name, is by St. Luke called Cyrenius), the president of Syria, was then sent to reduce the countries over which Archelaus had reigned, to a Roman province; and a governor of Judea was appointed under the title of Procurator, subordinate to the president of Syria.

Thus it appears that, with the exception of the short predicted tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, the kingdom of Judah, for a portion of the time independent, but generally

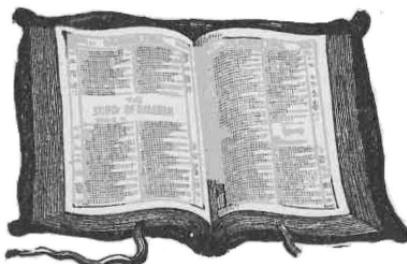
tributary, continued to enjoy its own religion and the form of its civil government, till after the birth of the Messiah. During our Saviour's ministry, the Jews were permitted to perform their religious worship without restraint or molestation; but Judea and Samaria were then governed by a Roman procurator, who had the power of life and death; and Galilee was governed under the authority of the Romans by Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, with the title of Tetrarch.

During the period to which the preceding history refers, the Jews had become very extensively dispersed among the nations; carrying with them their Divine law and prophecies, and establishing everywhere their synagogues and their worship. Many thousands of them had at different times gone to Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor; sometimes as captives, and at other times as voluntary settlers, having equal privileges granted to them with the other inhabitants. They became a very numerous body at Alexandria in Egypt, at Antioch in Syria, and at Ephesus and other cities of Asia Minor; whence they went to Corinth, Rome, and other remote places, where many of them by trade became rich and powerful. So that there was scarcely a country in the whole Roman empire in which there were not Jews living. Judaism had also been introduced in many ways among the heathen. Although only a few had become complete converts to it, so as to observe strictly the Mosaic law, many, particularly of the female sex, had become proselytes, so far as to worship Jehovah as the only true God.

All these widely dispersed Jews, and many of the proselytes, considered Jerusalem as their common capital; and not only sent yearly contributions and offerings to the temple, but also frequently repaired thither to the great festivals. Thus it came to pass, that on that memorable day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 5, 9-11, "there were assembled at Jerusalem, Jews," either by birth or proselytes, "devout men out of every nation under heaven." Thus also it was that in almost every city of the Roman empire where Paul preached, he found a body of his countrymen, many of whom were waiting for the "Consolation of Israel."

Meanwhile in the Gentile world the old systems of idolatry had fallen into disrepute, partly through the extreme corruptions of worship and of morals connected with them,

and partly through the cultivation of the philosophy of Greece; whose conflicting theories, however, utterly failed to satisfy the wants of mankind, as they afforded little solid truth, and produced no moral improvement. At the same time the universal prevalence of the Roman power, insuring internal peace and facilitating communication, together with its known indifference to the various forms of religious belief and worship, opened, for a time, a wider field for the diffusion of the Gospel. So that Providence combined with prophecy to mark this as the "fulness of time," when the "Desire of all nations" should come into the world.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Preface,	3
The Pentateuch,	5
The Historical Books,	11
Jews during the Captivity,	30
The Poetical Books,	31
Chronological Arrangements of the Psalms,	35
The Prophetical Books,	39
The New Testament,	59
The Gospels,	59
Harmony of the Gospels,	67
Acts of the Apostles,	77
The Destruction of Jerusalem,	77
Pauline Epistles,	79
General Epistles,	93
Revelation of St. John,	98
Summary of the Old Testament,	100
Summary of the New Testament,	102
History of Jews between the Old and New Testaments,	103